



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

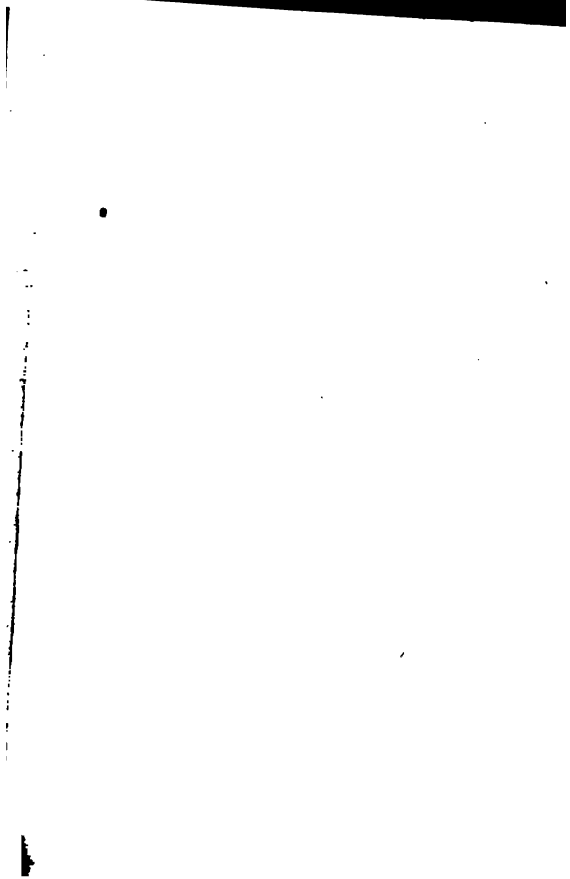
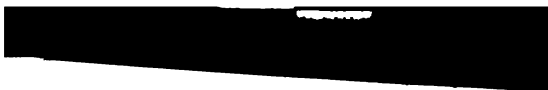
About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>











BRIGHT RAYS
AND
LIVING SHOWERS;

OR,
Book for all Characters and all Times.

By the Late
REV. JAMES SMITH,
Author of "The Believer's Triumph," &c.



LONDON:
SON AND SONS, PATERNOSTER ROW;
EDINBURGH; AND NEW YORK.

1865.

100. S. 124.



PREFACE

To glorify God, by doing good to men, is the great end of the present life ; and it is only as we keep the eye on this object, that we answer the design of God in our creation and salvation. The Lord has formed us for himself, that we may show forth his praise. God aims at our welfare in connexion with his own honour, in all that he does ; and in proportion as we are taught by his Spirit, influenced by his love, and ruled by his word, we shall do the same. Self must be dethroned, that Jehovah may be exalted. Selfishness must be crucified, that benevolence may be displayed. God must be imitated in his moral perfections if we would prove our relationship to him, or union with him. "Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful." Thus spake Jesus to his beloved disciples. "Be ye imitators of God as dear children," is Paul's exhortation to his brethren at Ephesus. And thus we are exhorted by the Holy Spirit, through him.

To bring souls to Christ is of immense importance, and to stir up believers to assist in doing so, is only second in importance to it : and such is the aim and object of this book. Yes, to glorify God by bringing souls to Christ, and to stir up believers to engage in this great work, is the object we have in view. Reader, we wish to render you holy and happy ; and this can only be done by leading you to receive Christ as your Saviour, and then engaging you heartily and constantly in his cause. It is only

in doing good, that we expect to get good ; and it is only as we aim at God's glory in all that we do, that we can benefit the souls of others, or secure solid happiness to ourselves.

In this work you will find variety, and yet harmony ; law, as well as gospel ; works, as well as faith ; love, as well as light ; bright beams as well as dark clouds. We wish to awaken conscience, to arouse the affections, to lead to the Saviour, to consecrate to God, to engage in his service for his praise. Time flies, death is working in us, and eternity is just before us ; let us, therefore, work while we have the opportunity, as it will soon be gone for ever. Reader, are you in Christ? Have you the Spirit of Christ? Are you labouring for Christ? Is it your object and aim to bring sinners to Christ? Ponder these questions well. They are deeply solemn, and of the last importance. If you are a stranger to experimental religion, may the Lord make this little work a blessing to you. If you are a believer in Jesus, enjoying nearness and fellowship with him, lift up thy heart to God, that he would accompany this feeble instrument with his own powerful blessing. Oh, Thou that usest the weak things of this world, and things that are despised, use this little book for the glorifying of rich grace : and render it the means of leading thousands of souls to Jesus, for thy great mercy's sake. Amen.

JAMES SMITH.





DIVINE CARE.

"He careth for you."—1 PETER v. 7.

THE Christian's life is very much made up of cares and comforts; cares spring from earth, comfort comes from heaven; cares prove him a sinner, holy comforts prove him a believer; cares flow in from a variety of quarters, true comfort from only one; cares come naturally, but comforts supernaturally. We shall be sure to have cares; but shall we have comfort? This depends on God's grace, which gives it; and our faith, which receives it. Cares must be cast on our God, or they will prove a burden too heavy for us; they will depress, bewilder, and make us wretched. But here is our comfort, we have always One to care for us; and the very one which of all others we would wish to do so. "The Lord careth for you."

For whom? For you, who are begotten again to a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead; who are born

again, not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever. For *you*, who are strangers and pilgrims on the earth, as all your fathers were. For *you*, who are placed in humble circumstances, being numbered with the poor of this world. For *you*, who are compassed about with so many cares, and who enjoy so few comforts; who are surprised at the fiery trials which try you, as though some strange thing had happened unto you. For *you*, who are worried and harassed by Satan, who as a roaring lion goeth about seeking whom he may devour. For *you*, who are persecuted by the world, and hated by all men for your Saviour's sake. For *you*, to whom Christ is precious, as he is to every one who really believes in him. God's care extends to every Christian; the young and the aged, the weak and the strong, the poor and the wealthy, the doubting and the confident. Believer, *He* cares for thee.

Who is it that cares for us? It is the Lord, the high and lofty one that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy; who is so great, that we have no adequate conception of his greatness; so good, that it is impossible fully to set forth his goodness

and so glorious, that no sinner can see his face and live. It is He who created all things with his word, who governs all by his wisdom, and upholds all by his power. His resources are infinite, his compassion exquisite, and his patience surprisingly great. He enters into all the circumstances of his people, is ever present with them, and rejoices over them to do them good. The angels obey him, the seraphim adore him, and all creation glorifies him; but though he is so exalted, so happy, and so unspeakably great, he careth for you. For *you*, mean as you are. For *you*, sinful as you are. For *you*, depressed and discouraged as you are. *He careth for you.* He cares for you individually, and according to the circumstances in which you are placed.

What does he do? He *careth* for you. He thinks of you. He watches over you. He sympathizes with you. He feels the greatest interest in you. He ever seeks your welfare. He infallibly secures your

Your misery touches his heart, your grief is open to his view, and your cries reach into his ears. He cares for you as much as for the proudest monarch on his throne, or the mightiest production of his

power. He cares for you, and his care is constant; it is not fitful, or occasional, but ever the same. He cares for you, and his care is paternal; it is the care of a father for his child, the child whom he tenderly loves, and for whose welfare he feels the deepest concern. He cares for you, and his care is perpetual; he will never care for you less than he does at present; when age weakens you, when wants pinch you, when death appears just before you, he will care for you as much as he did in youth, or as he does at this moment. He cares for you, and his care is beneficial; it prevents innumerable evils, and secures the greatest possible amount of good. It is more advantageous than the care of the kindest father, though that father were monarch of the mightiest empire, and possessed unbounded wealth. The care of God is of more value than the care of all his creatures combined. He careth for you, but his care is mysteriously exercised; it benefits us certainly, but secretly. It conceals itself behind the blessings it brings, and the evils it prevents. He careth for you, and his care is special; it is not the *care which he has for the beasts which perish, or the sinners who die under his*

frown. It is care that extends to the very hairs of your heads, which are all numbered; and to all the events and occurrences of life, however minute or commonplace.

Beloved, here is our comfort. We may lose the care of an earthly parent by death, but the Lord ever liveth, and while he lives he cares for us. We may lose the care of a kind and earthly friend, through the malice of a foe or misrepresentations, but the Lord ever loves us, thoroughly knows us, and never ceases to care for us. Here is the ground of our confidence for the future. We cannot put trust in a friend, or put confidence in a guide; we know not *where* we shall be, nor *what* we shall be, for we know not what a day may bring forth; but this we know, that God will care for us, and, caring for us, will fulfil his promises to us, and make all his goodness pass before us. If God cares for us, then let us cast all our cares upon him; let us live in daily fellowship with him; let us seek all our supplies from him. If God cares for us, let us not dishonour him by nursing our doubts, or encouraging our fears, but let us *trust in him at all times*, for his word is true, his love is constant, and his knowledge

is perfect. Let us "be careful for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let our request be made known unto God; and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Phil. iv. 6, 7). Let us attend to our Saviour's loving admonition, "Take therefore no thought for the morrow; for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof" (Matt. vi. 34). We shall never be without a friend, however trying our circumstances may be; or without a guide, however perplexing or difficult our path. The care of God is more than the care of all the angelic hosts; and if the care of God is not sufficient to preserve, supply, and satisfy us, then nothing is. The Lord help us to believe this precious truth, to realise it daily, that we may pass through the present world under the impression, "I am the object of God's tender, paternal, and ceaseless care."

"Oh, lover of sinners, on Thee
My burden of trouble I cast,
Whose care and compassion for me
For ever and ever shall last."



THE SONS OF GOD.

JEHOVAH determined not only to save his people, but to raise them to the highest possible honour and happiness; therefore he predestinated them to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ unto himself, to the praise of the glory of his grace. In the fulness of time he sent forth his Son made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because we are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Thus the Father decreed our adoption, the Son came to redeem us from bondage, and the Holy Spirit takes possession of our hearts, teaching us to call God, "Father." The purpose flowed from the Father's grace, the way was cleared by the Son's blood, and the nature and knowledge are imparted by the Spirit's work. The Father's love is the source, the Son's redemption is the channel, the Holy Spirit is the guide, and adoption into God's family

the blessing. The Father chose us to dwell with and enjoy him, the Son paid our ransom price with his blood, and the Holy Spirit effects our freedom and leads us to the Father's throne. Thus we are equally indebted to each of the divine persons in Jehovah, and should daily bless the Father, praise the Son, and adore the Holy Ghost: uniting the Father's purpose, the Son's merit, and the Spirit's power in our thoughts and our songs. Without a trinity we can form no scriptural idea of salvation; and no one understands the bible doctrine of salvation, who does not perceive that three divine persons are engaged in effecting it.

The sons of God are sinners; they are convinced of it, they deeply feel it, they mourn over it, and seek to be restored to God's image. They hate sin, love holiness, and daily pray to be made like Jesus, who was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. They love the Saviour, placing all their dependance on his perfect work, pleading his name before the Father for every blessing, and endeavouring to copy his example in the world, in the family, and the church of God. They look up to *God as a father, craving his blessing, seeking all their supplies from his hand, and*

doing his will from the heart ; or, if they cannot claim the relationship, they are ready to envy those who can, and sigh and cry for the Spirit of adoption, that he may bear witness with their spirits that they are the children of God. To them no privilege is so precious, no blessing so desirable, no favour so great, as to be able to claim and enjoy their covenant relationship to God. They suffer much from temptation, are often harassed with doubts, and are hated by the world which lieth in the wicked one. Here they have no continuing city, but they seek one to come ; they are strangers and pilgrims on the earth, as all their fathers were. They live by faith in God's promise, providence, and presence, and expect every blessing from his unmerited love. They know they have no claim, because they have sinned, yet they have confidence and hope, because God is gracious and hath given them his word. They expect to be chastised, because their Father is wise, and yet often fret and complain when they smart under the rod. They long for their home, yet dislike the way to it ; and they pray for deliverance, yet *cleave to the earth*. The sons of God are *all singular characters* ; they see Him who

is invisible, taste that the Lord is gracious, crucify the old man with his deeds, walk with God in friendship and peace, and set their affections on things above, not on things on the earth.

Beloved, if we are the children of God, our privileges are great, but our trials will be great too. Our joys will be peculiarly sweet, but our sorrows will be proportionably bitter. If we enjoy the friendship of God, we must endure the hatred of the world. If we walk with Jesus in love, we shall be tempted and harassed by Satan. If we have confidence in God's word, we shall be exercised with ten thousand fears. If we have the assurance of faith, we shall be plagued with many gloomy doubts. If our hearts are renewed by grace, we shall be distressed with their hardness and indifference. If we have the spirit of prayer, we shall groan because we know not how to pray, or what to pray for. If we are at peace with God, we shall have a constant conflict in our own bosoms: the flesh lusting against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh. If we are strong in the Lord, *we shall feel that we are not sufficient to think anything of ourselves, but that God must work in us both to will and to do of*

his good pleasure. If we hate sin, we shall feel it working in us, disturbing and distressing us, and often causing us to exclaim, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death?" Our lives will be a paradox, and we shall understand the apostle when he says, "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed. As unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold we live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things."

"How strange is the course that a Christian must steer
How perplex'd is the path he must tread;
The hope of his happiness rises from fear,
And his life he receives from the dead.

His fairest pretensions must wholly be waiv'd,
And his best resolutions be crost;
Nor can he expect to be perfectly sav'd,
Till he finds himself utterly lost.

When all this is done, and his heart is assur'd
Of the total remission of sins;
When his pardon is sign'd, and his peace is procur'd,
From that moment his conflict begins."



THE CHRISTIAN'S DAILY PRAYER.

"O Lord, remember me, and visit me."—JER. xv. 15.

THE prophet was in great trouble. Life was almost a burden. Yet the Lord had promised to show him special favour. He had promised to be with him, and that it should be well with his remnant. But the promises which support us do not always cheer us. We have always more wealth in our possession than we turn to account. But he falls upon his knees, he looks up to his God. Oh, what a relief is prayer! We never value it as we do in deep affliction, when the heart must find vent or burst. He cries, "O Lord, thou knowest my sincerity and deep suffering." He had sincerely sought the people's good, and done the Lord's will. But sincerity often exposes to suffering, but while it does so it soothes the spirit. "Lord," he says, "remember, and visit me." How beautifully simple! How expressive! How suited to us! Let us look at this prayer, and make it our own. *It is a time of trouble. Most are*

The Christian's Daily Prayer. 17

suffering from one cause or another. Oh, that the Lord would sanctify the sorrows of his people, and make the sufferings of his foes the means of their conversion!

“O Lord, remember me.” Who can bear to be forgotten? Especially by a kind, wealthy, and powerful friend. How could we bear to be forgotten of the Lord? But though he never will forget us, yet we may plead for a special remembrance. Lord, I am tried, troubled, and cast down; remember that I am thy child. Thou hast put me among thy children. I have called thee, Abba, Father. Thou hast owned me at thy throne of grace, and I cannot live contented without thy smile and thy blessing. I am thy weeping child. The sorrows of my heart are enlarged; oh, bring thou me out of my distresses! Remember, I am thy friend. I have been reconciled to thee by the death of thy Son. I have committed my all unto thee. I have been familiar with thee. I have poured out all my heart before thee. I cannot be happy except thou think of me, send to me, and show me friendship. Remember, I am thy soldier, engaged in thy *cause and quarrel*. I wear thine armour. *I fight under thy banner*. I am jealous of

(38)

18 *The Christian's Daily Prayer.*

thine honour. But I am wounded in the field. I find my foes too strong for me. My heart misgives me. My courage fails me. I cannot conquer unless thou appear for me, and strengthen me with strength in my soul. Remember, I am thy servant. I have been long in the family. I love thy children. I sometimes enjoy thy work. But I am weak, beset with fears, and discouraged in the path of duty : oh, remember me !

Remember me, for I am in an enemy's land. It is not the country I love and long for. I am in a howling wilderness, where there are few friends, little pleasant food, or refreshing rest. I am in a house of disease and death. All are suffering, and many are dying around me. Remember my weakness, for it is great ; my fears, for they are many ; my temptations, for they are violent ; my infirmities, for they are numerous and painful ; and my present circumstances, for they are very trying. Oh, remember my prayers, and answer them ; my desires, and grant them ; my wants, and supply them ; my labours, and crown them with thine effectual blessing ; and my sorrows, and sanctify them. Remember me, though I am so sinful, though

I am so unworthy. Remember me, for I do remember thee, and long for thy presence and thy love. Remember me, for Jesus did so when he suffered in Gethsemane, and died on the tree. Remember me, or I shall be miserable now, and wretched for evermore. No matter who remembers me if my God does not; or who forgets me, if I have the assurance of thy love and favour. "Remember me, O Lord, with the favour thou bearest unto thy people. Oh, visit me with thy salvation, that I may see the good of thy chosen, rejoice in the gladness of thy nation, and glory with thine inheritance."

"O Lord, visit me." What is life without God's presence! What would the world be if God did not visit us! How could we bear it if he were to say, "You have had the last visit! I will come to you no more!" But he will see us again, and our hearts shall rejoice. He will come unto us, and he will bless us. Still, promises are not enough, if we are really alive to God. We want their fulfilment. We cannot be satisfied unless the Lord comes, and manifests himself unto us. O Lord, visit me and soften my heart. It is hard and unfeeling. I have tried to melt it in

vain. I have taken it to Sinai, there it grows harder. I have taken it to Gethsemane and Calvary, but no place, no scene, no subject will do. It must be thy presence, thy smile, the sense of thy love. Only come unto me, and my hard heart will yield, and flow with streams of penitential tears. O Lord, visit me, and sanctify my temper. It is unlovely. It is trying to myself and others. I have had a long and severe conflict with it, but it is unlovely still. But thy presence will make me meek, gentle, loving, kind-hearted, and good-tempered with all about me. In my very worst moods, a visit from thee fills me with shame, self-abhorrence, gratitude, and humility; and then I am good-tempered in a moment. O Lord, visit me, and revive my graces. Faith is weak. Hope is languid. Love is unsettled and wandering. A visit from thee will fill me with confidence, raise my expectations, and cause my whole soul to glow with love. Then zeal will burn, repentance will work, fortitude will spring up, and every grace that should adorn the Christian character, will be in lively act and exercise. Oh, visit *me, and brighten my evidences.* They are *often so dim, so unsatisfactory, that I can*

The Dying Christian's Prayer. 21

derive no comfort from them. I want to feel sure that I am a Christian. To have no doubts, no misgivings. To have every satisfactory evidence in my heart and life; but unless thou visit me, I feel certain I shall not. Oh, visit me, and cheer my spirits. I am dejected and cast down. My comforts droop and die. I am low, in a low place. Oh, visit me, and confound my foes. They are many. They are powerful. They get access to my heart. They bewilder, confuse, and mislead me. They often cast me down wounded, and fill me with fear and dread. Oh, visit me, and perfect my resignation. I would yield to thy will in everything. I would prefer thy choice to my own. I would be perfectly satisfied with all thy arrangements. Oh, visit me, and produce this blessed, this desirable state of mind.

Beloved, God's remembrance is always fruitful, it always brings us good things. God's visits are always beneficial. They check every evil, nourish every grace, revive every virtue, and satisfy every really good desire. In this short prayer is all we shall want in life or in death. Are you *concerned that God should remember you?* *Could you bear to be forgotten of God?*

22 *The Dying Christian's Prayer.*

Did God ever visit you in mercy ?
He visited you lately ? Can you be satisfied without his visits ? Oh, make prophet's prayer your own, and daily
"O Lord, remember me, and visit me !"

"Lord, when I quit this earthly stage,
Where shall I fly but to thy breast ?
For I have sought no other home,
For I have learn'd no other rest.

I cannot live contented here,
Without some glimpses of thy face ;
And heaven without thy presence there,
Would be a dark and tiresome place.

When earthly cares engross the day,
And hold my thoughts aside from thee,
The shining hours of cheerful light,
Are long and tedious years to me.

And if no evening visits paid,
Between my Saviour and my soul,
How dull the night ! how sad the shade !
How mournfully the minutes roll !

My God ! and can a humble child,
That loves thee with a flame so high,
Be ever from thy face exiled,
Without the pity of thine eye ?

Impossible ! for thine own hands
Have tied my heart so fast to thee,
And in thy book the promise stands,
That where thou art thy friends must be



THE WORD OF COMMAND.

“Go forward.”—Exodus xiv. 15.

THIS supposes that you are in the right way, for if you are not, the command would be, “*Stop, turn about.*” We do not say to the careless sinner, “go forward,” for he is in the road to hell, and every step brings him nearer to that awful place. To urge him forward would be a cruelty, and prove that we were hardened in sin. But if you have entered in at the strait gate,—if you are in the narrow way,—if you have professed faith in Jesus,—if you are united to the Lord’s people,—if you are engaged in the Lord’s work,—if you are going to the land of promise which floweth with milk and honey, then “Go FORWARD.”

Let us notice,—

1. Some of the *inducements* to go forward. Your Head, your beloved Saviour, is before you. He has travelled the path; and, if you notice as you go on, you may observe his foot-prints. He ran the race. *He marked out the road. He conquered the foe. He went first as the Captain of*

salvation, and he now says to every soldier in his army, "Follow me: do as I have done." Would you not be like him? Would you not win his approbation? Would you not see him as he is? Would you not hear him say, "Well done?" Then "GO FORWARD!" Your *work* is before you. The foe is to be conquered. The land is to be possessed. The witness is to be borne. The enemies are to be reconciled. The truth is to be circulated. The command is to be obeyed. The predictions are to be fulfilled. And to you the voice cries, as to Lot when he came out of Sodam, "Look not behind thee; tarry not in all the plain." Before you are your brethren at labour; before you is the spot you are to cultivate; before you are the souls you are to win; therefore if you love your work,—if you would please your Master,—if you would serve your generation, "GO FORWARD!" Your *examples* are before you. In the distance you may see patriarchs and prophets, apostles and martyrs, reformers, and the great cloud of witnesses. They have borne their testimony,—they have spread God's truth, they *conquered the combined host of enemies,—they performed the will of God from thei*

hearts,—they suffered in his righteous cause,—they have left you an example that you should follow in his steps. “Be ye also followers of them who, through faith and patience, now inherit the promises.” If you would arrive safely where they are now,—if you would leave behind you a good name, as they have done,—if you would not have their example lost upon you, then “Go FORWARD.” Your *home* and *reward* are before you. This is not your rest: it is not your father’s home. Your brethren are hastening through this desert, they are fast arriving at the better country, they are passing into the city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. And, if you would not be left in this howling wilderness,—if you would not be overtaken by the “floods of great waters,”—if you would not be the laughing-stock of your enemies,—if you would not belie your profession, “Go FORWARD!”

2. You are under *solemn obligations* to “go forward.” Your God bids you; and his command is law. But not only is there authority; there is love. He is not only your *Sovereign*, but your Father. And as he bids you “go forward,” he will go with

you. He does not send you alone, or under the convoy of angels, but he says "I will go with thee." He is just before you, and he says, "Follow me." He sees some professors loiter and linger, and he says, "Whosoever doth not bear his cross *and come after me*, cannot be my disciple" (Luke xiv. 27). *The times demand it.* Everything around you is in motion—all is going forward. Commerce, politics—useful inventions, the arts and sciences—all things are moving onward. And shall the Christian, or the Christian church alone stand still or go backward? The Lord forbid it. Forward, beloved friends, or your heels will be trodden upon by those behind you, and those will pass you who have not half so much to animate them and stimulate them as you have. The times in which we live are peculiar; they are stirring times; everything is awake, and most things appear to be more wide awake than the church of Christ. Brethren, let us not sleep as do others; but let us wake up, watch, work, and "go forward" with courage and determination. *The state of the world requires it.* Popery is going forward. Other erroneous systems are going forward. Infidelity marches on

The world is still in darkness,—error reigns in it,—Satan possesses it,—and the dark places of it are still the habitations of cruelty. Hundreds of millions have never heard the gospel. Millions who have heard it, have not believed it. Thousands are falling into hell every day, and thousands are coming into life to take their places, imitate their folly, and meet their doom. By the ignorance that prevails,—by the cruelties that are practised,—by the crimes that are committed,—by the millions that are perishing,—by the myriads that fall into hell, we beseech you, “Go FORWARD!” *The condition of the church calls for it.* What shall we say of the church’s condition? She is weak and feeble. She is carnal and selfish. She is poor and miserable. Her converts are few. Her soldiers are cowards. Her divisions are many. Her Lord is dishonoured. Her enemies triumph. Her rival makes head against her. If you would see the church arise and put on her beautiful garments; if you would see her united and happy; if you would see her troops disciplined, her officers at their posts, her banners floating *in the four winds* of heaven, her enemies *retreating*, her triumphs increasing, her

borders enlarging, and her converts fleeing to her as a cloud, or as doves to their windows, then "GO FORWARD!"

3. *The consequences of not doing so will be fearful.* If you do not go forward, you will *go back*, for there is no standing still. But to go back is both dangerous and disgraceful. You have no armour for the back. You will give *your foes an advantage*, who have been watching for your halting, and predicting your fall. You will *falsify your profession*, for you have said, "I will be thine alone, thine in life, thine in death, and thine for ever." You will *lose your character*, and be covered with contempt and shame. Go forward, therefore, though difficulties, dangers, and obstructions are in your way! Go forward, for time is flying! Go forward, for death is coming! Go forward, for eternity is at hand! Go forward, and God will bless you! Go forward, and Satan will flee from you! Go forward, and angels will commend you! Go forward, and usefulness will crown you! Go forward, and eternal glory awaits you!

Sinner, forward to the hope set before you in the gospel! Rest not until you enter into the refuge, until you obtain your *pardon*, until reconciled to God, until your

bosom is the abode of peace. Anxious soul, forward to the cross ! There it is just before thee, look to it, plead it with God, expect salvation through it, renounce every thing beside it as the ground of thy acceptance with God. Go, anxious as thou art, agitated as thou art, vile and sinful as thou art, Jesus will receive thee, and will save thee with an everlasting salvation. Young believer, go forward to the church ! Publicly profess thy faith in Jesus by being buried with him by baptism into death, join the ranks of his army, take thy seat at his table, and join his people in every holy exercise, in every praiseworthy enterprise. Brethren, fellow-heirs of the grace of life ! Brethren, fellow-combatants in the field of conflict, forward to the crown ! Wrestle in our Saviour's strength ! Conquer by his blood, and the word of your testimony ! Fail not, faint not, slacken not your pace, till you sit down with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Jesus, in the kingdom of God. Let this be our motto, always and everywhere, "GO FORWARD!"



AN UNWISE SON.

"He is an unwise son."—HOSEA xiii. 13.

Now many parents are tried in their families. This appears to have been the case from the beginning.

Adam had a Cain,—Abraham, an Ishmael, — Isaac, an Esau, — David, an Absalom,—Solomon, a Rehoboam,—Ezekiel, a Manasseh,—and thousands besides, "*an unwise son.*" This is a source of grief, and a sore trial. But we write not now for parents, but for the young. Let us endeavour to

Describe a wise son. He is one who will listen to instruction. Especially if the instructor is wise, experienced, and affectionate. He will improve the opportunities that offer for increasing his knowledge, improving his character, and using his talents for a good purpose. He will avoid temptations, particularly temptations to infidelity, low amusements, and youthful lusts. He will select his companions, and *choose such as are* moral, industrious, and *devoted to God.* He will pursue know-

ledge in every legitimate way, especially the knowledge of himself, of his duty, and of God. He will set his heart upon a worthy object, an object worthy of an immortal being, of one capable of enjoying the presence and blessing of God for ever. Having set his heart upon a worthy object, he will steadily pursue it until he obtains it. In a word, he will live and act as an intelligent, accountable, and responsible creature, who views time as introductory to eternity, the present as preparatory to the future. Let us now

Glance at the criminal spoken of in the text, "*he is an unwise son.*" How is he known? What are his characteristics? He has closed his ear to the voice of wisdom, and he treats the book of God with contempt. He has neglected the most favourable opportunities of acquiring sound, spiritual, and useful knowledge. He has contracted evil habits, so that it is natural for him to sin, dishonour God, and debase his nature. He has chosen foolish companions, and has allowed them to lead him into folly, sin, and shame. He has squandered his *time* and talents, spending his *money* for *that* which is not bread, and his *labour* for *that* which satisfieth not. He

has preferred trifles to matters of moment, the trifles of time to the momentous concerns of eternity. He has lost the great end of life, which is to secure deliverance from sin, and a meetness and title to everlasting life. He is now evidently unwise, but how will his folly appear by-and-bye, when seen in the light of a death-bed, or an awful eternity?

Look at him; torn with conflicting passions, he can have no peace. He is tortured with bitter reflections, which will never end. He is excluded from happiness and from heaven. He is the sport of devils, and the contempt of hell. No being in God's universe pities him, but all join to condemn his folly, and justify his doom. He must reap through eternity the fruits of what he sowed in time. He has no one to blame but himself. He has destroyed himself. His destruction has been his own act and deed. God is simply just in executing upon him the sentence of his law, and fulfilling in him the threatenings of his word. He was not far from the kingdom of heaven once, but he is eternally shut out from it now. All that remains for him is *bitter reflection, unavailing sorrow, inde-*

scribable anguish, eternal despair. Awful condition ! Tremendous destiny ! Woful portion !

Reader ! are you *a wise son* ? Is your soul set upon obtaining salvation ? On obtaining it in God's way ? Are you seeking it now ? Are you determined to enjoy no rest until you rest in Christ ? Salvation is the one object we should pursue until we enjoy it ; and then, being saved, we should endeavour to glorify God to the uttermost, for the salvation he has so freely bestowed. Are you an *unwise son* ? You have had convictions, but have you stifled them ? You have felt concern, but have you drowned it in worldly pleasures or cares ? You have been urged to repent, but have you rejected the admonition ? Have you delayed and lingered ? Remember Lot's wife. She lingered on the plain and perished. Have you become hardened in sin ? O fearful state ! But think again. You are yet not beyond the reach of hope. You are not yet rejected by mercy. The gospel still calls to you, the strait gate may be passed by you, the way of salvation is open to you, Jesus is willing to save you. *Let me beseech you in God's stead to be reconciled to him.* His mercy is great.

(38)

unto the heavens, and his faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds. He will pardon all your iniquities, he will pass by all your transgressions, he will receive you into a father's arms, and press you to a father's heart. He glorifies his grace, exalts his mercy, and confirms his word in the experience of every coming sinner; and he will do so in you, if you come to him with confession and supplication. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John i. 9). You have been once more warned, shall it be in vain? You are once more invited to Jesus, will you still refuse? God's testimony has been once more delivered to you, will you again reject it? Have you no fear of hell? Have you no pity for your own soul? Have you no desire for heaven? Have you made up your mind to perish in your sin? Do you say there is no hope? But there is hope. There is certainty, for he that believeth in Jesus shall be saved, be he who he may; and if you believe in Jesus you shall be saved without doubt. *Trust in him, in him alone, and salvation is yours.* Trust in any one, or in any *thing else*, and you are eternally undone.



COUNSEL AND COMFORT.

“Hope thou in God.”—Pa. xlii. 5.

FELLOW-CHRISTIAN, we live in trying times. Nations are convulsed, thrones totter, crowns fall, confusion reigns, and men's hearts are failing them for fear. We cannot but *feel*; but we ought not to *fear*. There is enough to make us watch and pray, but not enough to deject or cast us down. The Lord reigneth. Our Saviour has all power in heaven and in earth. He directs every event, and will overrule every occurrence for the fulfilment of his word, and the good of his beloved people. “He worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.” Men may rage, infidels may blaspheme, professors may murmur, and real Christians may be filled with alarm; but He says, “My counsel shall stand, and *I will do all my pleasure.*” The Lord sitteth above the water-floods, he remaineth King for ever. *Therefore, let no man's heart fail him. Let us look to the divine word. Let us look out for the Lord's hand. There*

is the bow of mercy in every cloud ; but only the eye of faith can discern it.

Beloved, are you passing through storms, tempests, and trials? Hope in God, whatever your trial may be. Are you sick? He will make your bed, and sanctify your pain. Are you poor? He will answer your prayers, and supply your need. Are you sorrowful? He will comfort you, and give you joy for your sorrow. Are you tempted? He will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able to bear. Are you bereaved? He will be better to you than ten children. He will be a father to the fatherless, and a husband to the widow. He is a friend that loveth at all times, and ever lives to manifest his friendship. Are you in perplexity? He will bring the blind by a way which they knew not, and make your way plain before you. Do you fancy your trials are singular? He assures you that no temptation hath taken you but such as is common to men, and he bids you not to think it strange concerning the fiery trial that is to try you. Do you doubt your interest in Jesus, and *your title* to the promises? Read his sweet *invitations*, cast yourself afresh into his arms, and still hope in his mercy. Whatever

may be your trial, whether inward or outward, personal or relative, spiritual or temporal, still "*hope in God.*"

Hope, and do not *fret*, though the wicked prosper, and everything seems to be against you. Hope, and do not *murmur*; for you have a thousand mercies more than you deserve, and more than some of your fellow-pilgrims. Hope, and do not *despond*; for all things shall work together for your good; your God hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm. Hope, and do not *forebode*; for light is sown for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart. Hope, and do not *complain*; for your Lord forewarned you of all that has happened. He told you that in the world you should have tribulation, but in him you should have peace. Hope, and do not *dread*; no, not even death: for he that hath delivered doth deliver, and he will yet deliver you. He hath delivered you in six troubles, and in seven he will not forsake you.

Hope in God; for *he is* gracious, merciful, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth. He is faithful to his word. He is full of love to his children. He is *pledged by his word* to be a father to you. *He will not fail you, nor forsake you.* He

will surely do you good, and do you good even by your present trials and troubles. Hope in God ; for *he has* an infinite variety of blessings to bestow. He has all you need, and has it for you. He has all you ever will want, and he will supply all your need. He has all you can consistently desire, and he will fulfil the desire of them that fear him ; he also will hear their cry, and will save them. Hope in God ; *for he has said* to the coming sinner, "I will in no wise cast out." To the tried saint, "Cast thy burden on the Lord, and he shall sustain thee." To every believer, "My grace is sufficient for thee." To the weary, way-worn pilgrim to the celestial country, "Thy shoes shall be iron and brass, and as thy days so shall thy strength be." To each Christian, "I will never leave thee, I will never, no never, forsake thee." Hope thou in God ; for *he will do* as he has said ; yea, he will do exceeding abundantly above all we can ask or think. He will make all his goodness pass before us, and show us great and mighty things which we know not.

Hope in God ; for you *may* ; his invitations warrant you. You ought ; for his commands lay you under obligation. You

should; for his promises are exceedingly great and very precious. Hope, then, in God;—not in circumstances, however favourable; not in creatures, however kind; not in events, however propitious; not in connexions, however encouraging; not in evidences, however bright; not in prospects, however blooming. Hope in God, when you read his word, when you attend his ordinances, when you face his foes, when you circulate his truth, when he hides his face, when your comforts wither, when your gourds die, when friends forsake you, when foes slander you, when health declines, when poverty approaches, when storms gather, when Satan assaults, and when death stares you in the face. Hope, and be not dismayed. Let hope be the helmet that guards your head; the anchor that steadies your vessel; and the friend that holds up your head when the water-floods overflow you. In a word, at all times, in all places, under all circumstances, hope thou in God, for thou shalt yet praise him, who is the health of thy countenance and thy God.



PURITY.

"Keep thyself pure."—1 TIM. v. 22

WHAT cleanliness is to the body, holiness is to the soul; essential to its health, happiness, and beauty. But many who have clean bodies have very filthy souls. They pay attention to the outward man, but altogether neglect the hidden man of the heart. Yet nothing impure can enter heaven,—nothing unholy can enjoy the gracious or glorious presence of God. The Most High cannot hold fellowship with impurity or sin: where iniquity is indulged, communion with God is effectually prevented. Therefore he says, "Wash ye, make ye clean." "Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord."

Purity flows from grace. It is the effect of a living faith in Christ. It evidences the indwelling and work of the Holy Spirit of God. Where the Spirit dwells, sin is hated; the defilement of sin causes loathing, mourning, and fervent prayer. *Those who are much with God contract a natural dislike to sin, a love to holiness,*

and a growing desire for perfection. But "if we say that we have fellowship with God, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth." Light has no fellowship with darkness, but chases it away; God has no fellowship with sin, but condemns it in his law, crushes it by his Spirit, and cleanses it away by his gospel, brought home with power. He purifies the heart by faith. He sanctifies us through his truth. He washes us in the laver of his word, and effectually cleanses us by the power of the Holy Spirit. Blessed Lord, carry on the purifying process in our hearts! Set our whole hearts against sin, make it the abhorrence of our souls. Fill us with the deepest hatred to it, and make us groan whenever we in any measure indulge in it. Oh, to find sin the plague of our lives, the loathing of our souls, and holiness our element and delight!

But Paul was writing to a holy man. To one who was washed, sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. To one who was serving the Lord with a pure conscience. To his dearly beloved son. *To a minister of the gospel of Christ. To one who had received both the grace*

and gifts of the Holy Spirit. To one eminent alike in station, usefulness, and grace. Still to him he says, "*Keep thyself pure.*" The purest vessels may be soiled. The cleanest garments will contract defilement. The holiest may be overcome by temptation. The best need caution, counsel, and exhortation. None of us are safe any longer than God keeps us, and we have no right to expect that God will keep us but in the exercise of watchfulness, prayer, and faith. The best of men have fallen, and the best may fall. Those whom we least expected have, in an evil hour, given way to temptation; and what has been may be again. There is now very much impurity in the church. Few think that there is such a depth of defilement as there is. The curtain is now and then partially drawn on one side, and we are astonished at what the children of Israel do in the dark. Our young men need the exhortation of the apostle especially, "*Keep thyself pure;*" but they are not the only parties on whom it should be enforced.

"*Keep thyself pure*" from mental uncleanness. Some seem to revel in mental *debauchery* and filthiness. Their speech

at times betrayeth them, and their actions at others. Sin is very generally acted over in the mind first. Men do in thought what they would not do in deed; they become familiarised with the evil, and then, by-and-bye, it is acted out in the conduct. Sin always hardens the heart, brutalises the passions, and sears the conscience. It is by degrees that we are led into open transgression. The world within is far worse than the world without, bad as it is. The eye of God sees what would make us ashamed to lift up our heads among our fellows if it was known to them. Some do not seem to realise the evil there is in mental impurity. They yield to temptation, give way to folly, and perpetrate crimes in the chamber of their imagery; and do not feel ashamed, because no eye but God sees it; nor do they humble themselves, just because men are unacquainted with it. Some have reason to say with Solomon, though in a different sense to that in which he used the words, "I was almost in all evil, in the midst of the congregation and assembly." Oh, what does God's eye behold of impurity, *even in his own house, and among his own professed people!* If the pulpit ~~was~~ ex-

posed to the pews, or the pews to the pulpit, we should not be able to endure the presence of each other.

"Keep thyself pure" from actual uncleanness. He that indulges in unclean thoughts, will soon use unclean words, and then fall into unclean practices. God only knows the vast amount of impurity which is practised by professors of religion in the present day. We dare not write what we know, or even whisper to others what has been communicated to us. Beloved, let us cultivate purity of thought, purpose, speech, and action. Let us live under the impression that everything impure is odious in the sight of God; and that while he hates uncleanness anywhere, he especially hates it in his own people. Young men, who live in large towns and cities, who are thrown into the company of loose professors particularly, be you cautious. Keep a tender conscience. Realise that the ever-waking eye of a sin-hating, sin-punishing God is upon you, and *fear*. But especially realise the tenderness and greatness of God's love to you in Jesus, and that nothing can offend or grieve him but sin; and so from *love keep yourselves pure*. Impurity weakens *faith*, confuses the judgment, degrades the

affections, hardens the heart, alienates the soul from God, and renders our efforts to do good ineffectual. Many wonder that their work is not successful; but the real secret of the want of success often lies in the want of holiness. We are not fit for God's hands to touch. We are not fit for the Holy Spirit to sanction. The apostle, referring to evil men, evil principles, and evil practices, says, "If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and *meet for the master's use*, prepared unto every good work." Then he immediately adds, "*Flee also youthful lusts; but follow* righteousness, faith, charity, peace, *with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.*" (2 Tim. ii. 21, 22.) We want more holiness,—more entire consecration to God,—more inward hatred to *all sin*,—more self-denial in all its thousand forms,—more non-conformity to the world,—and a more exact copying of the example of our blessed and beloved Lord and Master. We must not expect much success without this; nor must we expect this until we are thoroughly broken down and humbled before God, and take *this word* for our guide, "Keep thyself pure." No holiness, no heaven.

Before we can have power with God, we must be *reconciled to him*. By nature we are enemies. We are rebels up in arms against him. We are opposed to him, and can have no power with him. When the Holy Spirit convinces us of sin, burdens us with a sense of guilt, alarms us with an apprehension of everlasting destruction, we then feel the sad consequences of alienation from God. We try various means to make peace with him, but all fail. At length he leads us to the cross, unfolds to us the wondrous love of God, explains to us the nature of the Saviour's work, fixes the eye of the mind upon the Crucified One; and then the heart softens, the tears begin to flow, enmity is subdued, hope springs up, reliance is placed on the glorious sacrifice, God appears a friend, and reconciliation is effected. The love of God is shed abroad in the heart, and the sinner heartily loves God as the effect of it. Friendship for eternity commences. God and man are upon the best possible terms. It *was* the righteous Judge meeting with the guilty criminal; it is *now* the gracious Father meeting with his tenderly beloved child. *The soul has "power with God,"—it asks and receives, that its joy may be full.*

There must be *faith in God*. We must give a warm-hearted credit to God's word, and exercise confidence in God's veracity and faithfulness. We must endeavour to understand just what God means in his promises and proclamations, and give credit to them; and we must go to God, expecting that he will prove himself true and faithful to his word. Without faith it is impossible to please God, therefore we can have no power with God. Neglect or disbelief of his word pours contempt upon him; but attention to it, and confidence in it, does him honour; and when he sees us struggling with unbelief, fighting against the vile insinuations of Satan, and endeavouring to confide in his truthfulness, he looks upon us with approbation, sympathises with us in our conflicts, and receives us at his throne with pleasure. Crediting his testimony, and confiding in his faithfulness, we have "power with God."

There must be *an abiding sense of our own weakness*. It was not until the patriarch felt himself unable to combat with his brother, and was broken down before God, that he prevailed. Weak Jacob overcomes the omnipotent angel. Nothing has such an influence upon our covenant God, as the

sighs, groans, and tears of his weak and humbled children. The weak believer takes hold upon God's strength, when, with the promise in his hand, the cross in his eye, ardent desires in his heart, and the plaintive language of supplication on his lips, he bows before the throne of mercy, and appeals to a Father's love. When we are weak, then are we strong. When we feel that we have no power to go against the great army of our foes, and our eyes are up unto our God, then victory is certain. Out of weakness we are made strong. The Lord fights for us and we hold our peace. Oh, to see the Lord's people thoroughly emptied out, and stripped of the last rag of their own righteousness; to see them broken down before God's throne, under a deep sense of their weakness and insufficiency; for then we may expect that great good will be done! But so long as we fancy we are strong, boast of our native powers, and rejoice in our own resources, we shall be weak, feeble, and easily overcome.

There must be *earnest application to the Lord for his blessing*. Prayer is conceived *in the depth of a believer's heart, under the prolific influences of the Holy Spirit, and*

is poured out before God's gracious throne in the dear Redeemer's name. The deeper our feeling of the importance and necessity of what we ask, the more earnest will be our prayers before God, and the greater our "power with God." A cold acquiescence in divine statements, a formal confession of our needs, and a matter-of-course application to God, will do no good. We must feel, and we must feel deeply, before we shall be powerful on our knees. Too many talk before God, rather than plead with God. They pray from custom, not from necessity. Oh, if we realised that we were the friends of God, if we had strong faith in God, if we were deeply sensible of our weakness before God, if we with downright earnestness applied to God, it would soon be seen that we had "power with God."

There must be *an habitual hatred of all sin*. For if we indulge iniquity in our hearts, the Lord will not hear our prayers. The image of jealousy set up in our hearts, be it what it may, will deprive us of all power with God. He will ask, "Do you provoke the Lord to jealousy?" He will say, "Put away every man his idols from *before mine eyes*." If we indulge *covetousness, gluttony, uncleanness, worldly*

conformity, deceit, intemperance, hatred, variance, strife, evil speaking, frivolity, or any other sin in our hearts, we cannot have power with God. His word to us is, "Wash ye, make ye clean; put away the evil of your doings, cease to do evil, learn to do well." One cherished sin, let it be what it may, will effectually prevent our having "power with God." This accounts for so many prayers being offered in vain. They are scriptural in form, suited to our circumstances, earnestly expressed, and devoutly presented, but secret sin indulged prevents their success.

Beloved, if we have power with God, we shall have power *over self*. Energetic prayer will bring the arm of God to bear on our corruptions, and subdue them; on our tempers, and control them; on our improper habits, and we shall conquer them. No power short of Divine can really conquer one sin, or effectually subdue one corruption of the heart. If we have power with God, we shall have power *with men*—with good men to influence them, with bad men to benefit or silence them. Power with God brings a secret energy into the *soul, by which we conquer and accomplish what would otherwise be impossible.* If

we have power with God. we shall have power *over Satan*. What an awful description is given of him in the Apocalypse, "That old serpent, the devil, *which deceiveth the whole world.*" How marvellous his power! How amazing his influence! And this power and influence is opposed to, and brought to bear upon, the church of God. How many professors are deceived by him. How many are led captive by him at his will. The head laid on Delilah's lap has been shorn of its locks, and our Samsons are now, many of them, the sport of the infernal Philistines. Satan has proved himself too powerful and too crafty for thousands of professors; he has induced them to settle down in a mere form of religion, or to indulge in some secret sin, or to substitute external services for the internal experience of the power of God's truth, and they have no power with God. Nothing will conquer Satan, but power gained from God. He cares for no foot, but that which crushed his head on Golgotha. Nor can we ever conquer self, succeed in our efforts to do lasting good to men, or overcome Satan who overcomes *such millions*, but as we have power with God. Oh, Holy Spirit, the Spirit of power,

break us down before God, set our hearts against *all* sin, give us faith in God, indulge us with a vivid sense of our reconciliation to God, and enable us to pray with fervour, that so we may have *power with God*.

In themselves as weak as worms,
How can poor believers stand,
When temptations, foes, and storms,
Press them close on ev'ry hand?

Weak, indeed, they feel they are,
But they know the throne of grace,
And the God who answers pray'r
Helps them when they seek his face.

Though the Lord awhile delay,
Succour they at length obtain,
He who taught their hearts to pray,
Will not let them cry in vain.

Wrestling pray'r can wonders do,
Bring relief in deepest straits;
Pray'r can force a passage through
Iron bars and brazen gates!

For the wonders God has wrought,
Let us now our praises give,
And, by sweet experience taught,
Call upon him while we live.





CONSISTENT TEACHING.

"Teachest thou not thyself?"—ROM. II. 21.

WE all need teaching ; but, generally speaking, we love to teach rather than to be taught. We instruct others, but neglect ourselves. This is true of preachers and Sabbath-school teachers especially, and the language of Paul may be addressed to many of us, "*Thou that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?*" Let us endeavour for once to be impartial, and look at this point closely, soberly, and seriously.

Thou teachest others *to be temperate*, but indulgest thyself far beyond what nature requires. A variety of dishes must be provided, glass after glass is taken, and, if positive intoxication is avoided, conscience has learnt to be silent, and all passes off as well. If two invitations are given, one to plain homely fare, where the spare time will be taken up in prayer and praise, or *godly conversation*, and another to a *sumptuous table*, where dessert and wine will

occupy the spare time, or conversation about ministers, or some common topic, will engage the attention, which will be preferred? "*Teachest thou not thyself?*"

Thou teachest others *self-denial*, but dost not practice the same thyself. Others are exhorted to make sacrifices,—to work for God,—to earn that they may give, to give even out of their poverty; but the teacher is paid for all he does, and gives little or nothing. Not a journey does he take without some remuneration; not a sacrifice does he make, not a power does he overtax. He talks freely, urges warmly, illustrates eloquently, argues fervently; but he is ranked among some whom our Lord addressed, "*They say and do not.*" Reader, is this at all like you? "*Teachest thou not thyself?*"

Thou teachest others *to be humble*; but is humility thy characteristic? A proud man in the pulpit preaching humility, or a proud teacher in the class teaching humility—what an anomaly! And yet there are such things. They talk about humility; but their general bearing, their conduct towards others, their evident self-importance, proves that they are not *humble*. They appear to say, "Others

should be humble, I may be proud. Others should be meek, I may be haughty. Others should submit, I may resent. Others should forbear, I may avenge myself." Or, "Do as I say, not as I do." Can this be right? How must it appear in the eyes of God? Preacher, teacher, professor, art thou proud? Is there the proud look? The haughty manner? The contemptuous sneer? The cold, distant, self-important bearing? Can this be approved of God? Will this pass the scrutiny of the Most High? Will the Holy Spirit fill thy heart, or consecrate thy body as his temple? Is it any wonder that you meet with no success? "*Teachest thou not thyself?*"

Thou teachest *activity for God* and immortal souls; but the pipe, the parlour, the light volume, or some scientific pursuit, occupies thy time and attention. Others should go out into the streets and lanes of the city, and into the highways and hedges; others should visit the sick, relieve the poor, warn the rebellious, expostulate with the backslider, and carry the gospel to every creature; but you have not the tact, the talent, the time, in one word, *you have not the disposition*. If you would, there is *very much that you could do*. Indeed,

none of us know what we can do until we try. The slothful man saith, "There is a lion without; I shall be slain in the streets. There is a lion in the way; a lion is in the streets." A likely thing—"A lion in the streets!" No, no; it is idleness, it is sloth and the love of ease in the heart. Be active thyself, or say nothing about it. Never blame others, except you set them the example. "*Teachest thou not thyself?*"

Thou teachest, it may be, *close walking with God*; but, like Peter, followest afar off thyself. What! is it good for others to get near to God, to live as under his eye, to speak always as within his hearing, and to endeavour to commend themselves to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator; and can it be well for thee to live at a distance, to forget his presence, to speak as if he heard thee not, and to walk as though he regarded not thy conduct? Many talk of close walking who know but little about it. They are seldom closeted with God. They realise but little of his presence. They receive but few communications from him. They are but seldom *thirsting* for his presence. Alas! the *frivolous conversation*, the worldly spirit, the

careless manner, and the want of conformity to God, tell a tale which cannot be well misunderstood! Thou that urgest others to walk closely with God, "*Teachest thou not thyself?*"

Thou teachest also *the importance of gospel ordinances*; but are they prized by thee? Do you frequent the prayer-meeting and the weekly sermon? Or, will a little weariness, a short distance, or a slight indisposition, satisfy thy conscience as furnishing a sufficient reason for thy absence? If gospel ordinances are important, let them be treated with respect, and be observed with punctuality. Have you been baptised on a profession of your faith? Why not? Do you regularly attend at the Lord's table? Is your place in the sanctuary regularly occupied? If ordinances are means of grace, do you not need grace? If you need grace, ought you not regularly to use the means through which grace is communicated? If you do not regularly use the means, is it not evident that you do not desire the grace you need? If you teach at all, you should teach the value and importance of *gospel ordinances*; but if *you do so teach*, you ought to be very careful to corroborate by your conduct what

you teach with your tongue. "*Teachest thou not thyself?*"

Thou teachest that a man should be *prepared for death*, or *stand ready for the coming of his Lord*. But are you prepared to die? Are you ready if the Bridegroom should come? Are you watching, waiting, and working? Do you live *above* the world, distinct *from* the world, aiming always to glorify God *in* the world? Is your hope laid up in heaven? Can you prove that your treasure is there, because your hearty hopes and affections are there? Are you like the loving bride, who sighs, desires, and longs for the return of her beloved bridegroom? Are you looking for that blessed hope, even the glorious appearing of the great God our Saviour, Jesus Christ? Or, are you living *in* the world, pleased *with* the world, scraping together the yellow dust *of* the world, and feeling the greatest reluctance to *leave* the world? Would the news of the Lord's coming to-day, or to-morrow, be unpleasant to you? Search, look, and allow me to ask, "*Teachest thou not thyself?*"

My dear brethren, this subject requires *our most solemn and serious consideration.*

Much that is *seen* by ourselves, and *said* by others, demand that we should pay attention to it. How can we teach others consistently, if we do not teach ourselves? How can we reprove others for intemperance, if we take as much or more ourselves? How can we preach "*Owe no man anything*," if we contract debts and neglect to pay them? How can we urge others to be meek and lamb-like, if we are passionate and roar like lions? How can we exhort others to self-denial, if we indulge ourselves in pampering our appetites, in costly apparel, in expensive journeys, and unnecessary furniture? How can we reprove others for inactivity, if we are dull, lifeless, and dronish? How can we urge others to liberality, if we are close-fisted, covetous, and lovers of filthy lucre ourselves? In a word, how can we reprove any sin, if we indulge in it,—exhort to any duty, if we neglect it,—urge to the attainment of any excellence, if we disregard it—or be of much use, either to the world or the church, except we live up to our profession? Holy Spirit! come down in all the fulness of thy power upon all our pastors, preachers, and teachers, and so sanctify, influence, and transform us, that we

may teach what is truth, and practice what we teach ; that we may profess what we believe, and conform our lives to our profession, for the dear Redeemer's sake?—Amen.

Great God, who kills and makes alive,
To me the quickening power impart ;
Thy grace restore, thy work revive,
Retouch my lips, renew my heart ;
Forth with a fresh commission send,
And all thy servant's steps attend.

I would the precious time redeem,
And longer live for this alone,
To spend, and to be spent for them
Who have not yet my Saviour known ;
Fully on these my mission prove,
And only breathe to breathe thy love.

My talents, gifts, and graces, Lord,
Into thy blessed hands receive ;
And let me live to preach thy word,
And let me for thy glory live,
My every sacred moment spend,
In publishing the sinner's Friend.

Enlarge, enflame, and fill my heart,
With boundless charity divine ;
So shall I all my strength exert,
And love them with a zeal like thine ;
And lead them to thine open side,
The sheep for whom their shepherd died.



WHAT IS YOUR LIFE?

"What is your life?"—JAMES iv. 14.

IF God ask a question, we should listen to it, think of it, and prepare an answer. Here the Lord puts a question to us; it refers to the brevity of our mortal existence; he asks each one of us, "What is your life?" We think much of it. We make great provision for it. We spend much *thought* upon it. We are very careful to preserve it. *But what is it?* Let us ponder this question. Let us give it the attention it deserves. It is especially suitable to us when shut up in our sick chamber, when afflicted and tried with losses and crosses, or at the commencement of a new year. Our sufferings may be great, our trials may be many, but they must be short, for *what is our life?* Let us look *At its duration.* It is exceedingly brief. No one figure can set forth its brevity, or sufficiently affect our minds with it, and therefore many are employed. It is like a *flower, which springs up under the influence of an eastern sun, which blossoms for*

an hour, and then fades and dies. It is like a shadow, which lessens and lessens until in a few minutes it is gone. "It is like the shuttle which flies from the weaver's hand, and passes before the eye so swiftly, that one can but just see it and say, It is gone." It is like the wind which rushes by us; we hear it, we feel it, and it is no more. It is like the dried leaf, or the thistle down, which is made the sport of the breeze, and soon carried out of sight. In one passage in the book of Job, we have figures taken from three elements, to represent its rapid flight. It is swifter than a post, which travels with the greatest speed, and makes no delay. It is like the swift ships, with all their sails spread, which, with the canvas crowded, glide along the watery way. It is like the eagle hastening to its prey, compelled by hunger; with strong pinions it cuts the air, and is soon at the point where it would be (Job ix. 25, 26). What then, is your life? "It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." What is it in *retrospect*? Look back over the past ten or twenty years; how swiftly they have passed away, *and every year appears to pass more quickly than the last.* What is it in *comparison*?

What are your thirty, or forty, or even seventy years, if compared with the age of the antediluvian patriarchs,—Methuselah, for instance? But what are they in comparison with eternity? Think of endless duration, of interminable ages; and while you think of them, ask, “What is my life?” Ah, what? No comparison can be drawn, but the thought may be improved. May the Lord help us to improve it.

This naturally leads us to inquire,

What is its design? Why was life given us? Why is it continued to us? It has reference to three parties. First, *to ourselves*; and the design is to prepare us for eternity. We must live for ever; but *how* depends upon the present. If we live in sin here, we must live in suffering for ever. If time is spent in folly, eternity will be spent in bitter, unavailing remorse and sorrow. If we believe in Jesus, exercise repentance toward God, are renewed in the spirit of our minds, and devote our lives to God’s service, then eternity will to us be an endless existence in pleasure, satisfaction, and unspeakable delight. In reference *to God*; the design of our life is *to glorify him*, which we can only do by *believing his promises*, embracing his Son.

observing his precepts, and consecrating our time and all our talents to his praise. Here we should live *for* God, and then in eternity we shall live *with* God. Here we should aim in all things to honour God, and then in eternity God will honour us. In reference *to our fellow-men*; the design of our life is to benefit and do them good. No one is created for himself. Each one is bound to his fellow, and every one should aim to benefit the whole. We should serve our generation by the will of God. And life is misapplied, it is squandered, it is wasted in folly, if we do not use it to secure our eternal salvation, to promote God's glory, and to advance the holiness and happiness of our fellow-men.

What is its character ? Looking at its *natural* character, it is a gift conferred upon us by our beneficent Creator. A gift which, if rightly used, will prove invaluable; but which, if abused, will be an occasion of eternal regret. God gave us life; he placed us high in the scale of his creatures; he made us capable of serving, enjoying, and glorifying him for ever; he has given us also the means of grace, set *before us the way of salvation*, and *promised his Holy Spirit* unto them that ask him.

Having given us life, he has crowned that life with loving-kindness and tender mercies, and has pointed out the way by which we may obtain everlasting blessedness. But let us look at its *moral* character. What is our life in reference *to others*? Is it exemplary? Is it convincing? Is it useful? Is it likely to make a good impression? What is our life in reference *to ourselves*? Is it holy or profane? Is it godly or ungodly? Is it becoming an immortal being, one who *must* live for ever? This view of the subject is not sufficiently attended to by many. Is it by us?

What is the importance of our life? Ah, who shall say? Who can describe, what language can set forth, the importance of our present life? It is the bud of being; the flower will not open on this side the grave. It is the youth of existence; we shall not be full-grown in this world. It is the seed-time of eternity; what is sown now will be reaped in a changeless state. It is the introduction to immortality. What then is its importance? Ask the dying sinner, whose eyes are just opened, whose soul is just awakened to the solemnities of the *eternal world*. What reply will he give? *Look at his death-struck countenance, mark*

the expression of his half-glazed eye, hear the accents of his tremulous voice; but he fails, he tries in vain to set forth the importance of the present life. He exclaims, "Oh, that I had my time over again! Oh, that I had one year, but one month, one week, of the time I have squandered! But wishing is in vain. 'The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and I am not saved.' The importance of life I cannot describe. The value of time I can never declare." Ask the lost soul. The soul which, like the rich man, lifts up its eyes in hell, being in torments. Despair now rules over the immortal spirit. Agonies, beyond description, torture the never dying intellect. What is its estimate of the importance of life? But it would require a new language to describe, unearthly figures to illustrate, and a voice such as we have never heard, to set forth its estimate of the precious gift. Only in the depths of hell, or in the highest heavens, is the value of life really known. The glorified saint, while he tunes his golden harp, sings his never-dying song, and drinks in pure and celestial pleasure, can estimate, but not fully describe, the importance of this present life.

Sinner, what is your life? Is it sin?

Time spent in opposing God? Time squandered upon folly? Time dreamed away to no useful purpose? Is it trifling? Oh, how many trifle away their precious time! They despise their own souls. They live as if existence were bounded by time, and all beyond were annihilation. Is it folly? How many live fools! They provide for the body; but they neglect the soul. They live for time; but they lose sight of eternity. The accepted time passes away unheeded. The day of salvation is spent in sin. They only lay a foundation for everlasting self-condemnation, and open in their own hearts a source of never ceasing agony. Believer, what is your life? Is it Christ? Can you say with Paul, "For me to live is Christ?" Does Christ live in you? Are you spiritually minded, and do you find it life and peace? Is it a wise preparation for eternity? Are you living *now* as you will wish you had lived *by-and-bye*? Life is at best but short; let us improve it. Life is uncertain; let us make sure work for eternity. Life, if rightly viewed, is very solemn; let us spend it as intelligent and accountable creatures should. And when tempted to trifle, when inclined to squander away a day or an hour, let the

question influence our decision, "What is your life?" If it is brief, should it be spent thus? And let the Saviour's question be seriously considered by all who make gain the end of life,—“What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Mark viii. 36, 37.) Reader, the time is short, eternity is near, salvation is of infinite importance; let us therefore decide, and accept the Saviour's glorious invitation at once, and so shall we be saved for ever.

“Life is real! Life is earnest!
And the grave is not its goal;
Dust thou art, to dust returnest,
Was not spoken of the soul.

Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us
Footsteps on the sands of time;

Footprints, that perhaps another,
Sailing o'er life's solemn main,
A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,
Seeing shall take heart again.

Let us, then, be up and doing,
With a heart for any fate;
Still achieving, still pursuing,
Learn to labour and to wait.”



WHY WAS I BORN ?

THIS is a simple question, and yet, perhaps, some have never proposed it to themselves ; or, if they have, they have not sought for a satisfactory answer. We cannot think that we were born merely to eat, drink, work, laugh, suffer pain, and die. God created us for a noble end ; we were born for important purposes. Let us notice a few things for which we were born.

First,—*To display God's power.* How glorious must the power of God be, to conceive the thought, and produce such a noble creature as man. A being partly animal and partly spiritual. Allied to both worlds. Like Himself, and yet like His meaner creatures. It takes Omnipotence to make a man. And when God creates an intelligent creature, it is to display His power. We begin to be, but we shall never cease to be ; for the power that made us at first, will sustain us in existence for ever. *What a thought is this, I must live for ever and ever live to display the power of God.*

Secondly,—*To learn and do God's will.* We are capable of acting,—of acting as God bids us, or in opposition to His will. He intended that we should be active, but that His will should be the rule of our actions. He has revealed His will at different times, in different ways. But now we have all His will in His word. Here He tells us what to do and what to avoid,—what will please Him, and what will expose us to His anger. Any one who wishes and seeks, may know what is God's will. We were born to learn and do God's will.

Thirdly,—*To seek God's blessing.* His blessing is the source of wealth and happiness. We cannot be happy except God bless us, and we have no right to expect God's blessing except we seek for it. He blesses all who forsake sin, rely on the sacrifice of His Son, and seek His face by prayer. We were born that we might know God, seek the blessing of God, do the will of God, and receive happiness from God.

Fourthly,—*To enjoy God's favour.* His favour is the life of the soul. It is the happiness of every intelligent creature. The greatest thing that we can possess or enjoy

is God's favour. To be the favourite of God is to be among the most honourable of His creatures. We may know that we are in God's favour, and enjoy all the effects of it. We are capable of this, and the means of doing so are presented to us in the word of God, the means of grace, and the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Fifthly,—*To dwell in God's presence.* He is always with us, though often unperceived by us. He fills the world we inhabit, and we ought to realize, wherever we are, God is here; whatever we do, God sees me; whatever we say, God hears me; whatever we think, God reads my thoughts. Our one design therefore should be, to please God; and our one aim, to commend ourselves to Him. If we dwell in God's presence on earth, we shall do so in heaven. He that walks with wise men will be wise; and he that walks with God will be godlike. If God is our friend and companion now, at death we shall change our place; but not our company.

Sixthly,—*To reflect God's glory, and praise His name for ever.* God created us for His own glory, and He will glorify Himself in us. He will glorify His grace in our salvation, or His justice in our con-

demnation. God will not lose His end; His purpose cannot be frustrated. If you will not glorify Him by receiving His word, embracing His Son, and doing His will, He will glorify His justice, holiness, and equity, in your punishment for ever. Which will it be?

Reader, you are the creature of God's power; do you realize it? You were born to learn and do God's will; do you make this the business of your life? You are exhorted to seek God's blessing; do you attend to it? You are invited to enjoy God's favour; will you accept of it? You may dwell in God's glorious presence to all eternity! but will you? God must be glorified in you; shall it be in your salvation or damnation,—in your songs or your sighs,—in your joys or your torments,—in your hallelujahs or your endless wailings? Think. Decide. Pray. Let your life declare.

“O Lord, do thou the sinner turn!
Now rouse him from his senseless state;
Oh, let him not thy counsel spurn,
Nor rue his fatal choice too late!”



WHAT IS MY BUSINESS ?

THIS is a question of importance. It requires consideration. It deserves an answer. Unless we know our business, we cannot attend to it, and unless we attend to our proper business, we cannot gain a good character. Certainly we were not intended to live in idleness. We were created for activity. We are placed in the world to *get* good and *do* good. What, then, is my proper business as

A MAN? It is to ascertain God's will, and do it. To learn what will glorify God, and aim at it. To live as in God's sight. To work for God's honour. To seek God's company. To reverence God's majesty. And to prefer God's will to everything beside. It is my business to serve my generation, to try and benefit all around me, and to prove that I do not love any one *less* than I love myself. In one word, to *do* all the good I can, and *prevent* all the evil that I can. Now, have I learned *my business*? Do I *love my business*? Do I *follow my business*? Am I a good

hand at my business? Alas! few consider this their business, and the few that do often lose sight of it. We have all sinned, and in so doing, have *come short* of the glory of God. What, then, is my proper business as

A SINNER? It is to confess my sins to God, and seek pardon from God. Reconciliation to God, acceptance with God, and restoration to the image of God, should daily occupy our thoughts, engage our minds, and be the end of our pursuits. Our business is, to ascertain how man can be just with God, and obtain that privilege; how man can enjoy peace with God, and enjoy that blessing; how man can be fitted for the presence and service of God, and be prepared for the same. Our business as sinners is neglected or unfinished until we receive the atonement, have access to God with confidence, walk with God in holy fellowship, and find the presence of God our chief joy. Have *we* attended to this business? Have *we* learned it? Are *we* reaping the fruit of it? If so, we are saints,—we are the children of God,—we are heirs of immortal life. What, then, is *my proper business* as

A SAINT? It is to admire, adore, and

adorn the free and sovereign grace of God, which has distinguished me from so many around me. *All* are sinners. Only a *few* become saints. And all saints do not learn and follow their proper business as they should. What should a saint do? He should carefully copy the example of his Saviour, for Jesus has said, "I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done." His example is bright, beautiful, and perfect. It is just what God requires, and what the saint in his best moments desires to be. He should go about doing good. He should sympathize with human misery in every form and wherever discovered. He should aim to spread the knowledge of Christ, and endeavour to make every one happy by leading him to Christ. Every talent should be employed. Every opportunity for doing good, even upon the smallest scale, should be embraced. It is our business to "teach every one his neighbour, and every one his brother, saying, Know the Lord." To oppose sin, to banish ignorance, to relieve indigence, and to endeavour to introduce happiness into every circle and every place. Every morning we should ask, Can I do good to any one to-day? Can I make any one happy? Can

I spread the knowledge of Jesus? Can I lead a soul to God? Shall I not try? Ought I not to attempt it? May not God honour any feeble, well-meant endeavour to accomplish so glorious a work? But we are mortal, we shall soon die, we must exchange time for eternity. What, then, is my proper business as

A TRAVELLER TO ETERNITY? It is daily to keep the end in view. To live as one that must give an account, and who may be called very soon, very suddenly, to do so. My business is to *keep short accounts*, putting off nothing until to-morrow which I can do to-day; and daily getting my sins blotted out in the precious blood of Jesus. Never let me lie down at night with guilt on my conscience, or carry the guilt of to-day into the business of to-morrow. I ought to keep my loins girt, my lamp clean, my vessel full of oil, my evidences bright, and my affairs all in readiness for the sudden coming of the Lord. Dying will be found quite work enough for the last day, without leaving anything to finish then. Let us, therefore, "die daily;" let us do every day's work in the day; and "*so an entrance shall be ministered unto us abundantly into the everlasting kingdom*"

of our Lord and Saviour." Beloved, let us ask, "*What is my business?*" And let us attend to it carefully, cheerfully, and constantly; that so, when the Master comes, he may say, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

"The last loud trumpet's wondrous sound
Shall wake the nations under ground :
Where then, my God, shall I be found,
When all shall stand before thy throne,
When thou shalt make their sentence known,
And all thy righteous judgment own ?

Thou, who for sinners felt such pain,
Whose precious blood the cross did stain,
Who did for us its curse sustain,
By all that man's redemption cost,
Let not my trembling soul be lost,
In storms of guilty terror toss'd.

Give me in that dread day a place
Among thy chosen, faithful race,
The sons of God, and heirs of grace :
Trembling, before thy throne I bend;
My God, my Father, and my friend,
Do not forsake me in the end."





FOR WHAT END HAVE I LIVED?

WE are all living for some end, either right or wrong; and the end for which we live is decided by the course we pursue. If we live in the gratification of our passions, in the practice of sin, and indulging vicious propensities, we are only living to dishonour God, degrade our natures, and eternally ruin our souls. Many men never ask, What should I have in view in my conduct? They live in a careless, thoughtless, indifferent state. One would think that the only end of life with them was to eat, drink, work, take a little carnal pleasure, and die. They seem seldom to raise their thoughts higher. They lose sight of the capabilities of their nature. They never reflect on the greatness and glory of God. They drive from them all thoughts of eternity. They satisfy themselves with the idea, "I dare say I shall fare as well as thousands of my fellows." Or, perhaps, they indulge the vague hope, *that because God is merciful, therefore all will be well with them at last.* Whereas,

nothing can be more fallacious. No course of conduct can display greater folly.

Reader, what have you been living for? Do you know? Have you been living as an immortal, intelligent being, or like the beasts that perish? Have you ever steadily fixed your eye on eternity, and asked, with due seriousness, What shall I be when time is no more? What will be my employment in another world? If not, it is quite time that you did. You must live whether you will or not. You have no choice as to existence. You are destined *to live for ever*. Your soul can never die. Is it not a serious thought, "I must exist, I must live for ever?" Will you not dwell upon it, and ask, Where shall I exist? In what state shall I be? In what company shall I dwell? How will God treat me? What will angels and my fellow-men think of me? Oh, if you should be fixed in a state of unchangeable woe! If you should be doomed to dwell with devils and lost souls for ever! If you should, at death, be plunged into black despair, where there is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth! But if you are, *it will be your own fault*. Just think over this idea, "*If I go to hell, it 'll be my own fault.*" God sends no one

82 *For what End have I Lived ?*

to hell but for sin. Christ dooms no one to suffer eternal punishment, in a land like ours, *but those who refuse to be saved by his merit and mercy.* If you, therefore, go to hell, it will be because you love sin, and live in the practice of it, and because you refuse to be saved by the Lord Jesus Christ.

If you, then, should perish, will you not richly deserve it? Can you blame any one but yourself? You have a bible, or you may have one if you will. You hear the gospel, or you can hear it if you please. In the gospel the gate of life is set wide open, and any one may enter it; the road to glory is plainly marked out, and you are invited to walk in it; the way to hell is clearly set forth, and you are warned to forsake it, and go in the way everlasting. What, then, are you living for? What end do you propose to yourself in your daily walk? What do you aim at? If you wrong your own soul by losing sight of its best interests,—if you perish in your sins by neglecting the great salvation,—if you are condemned at last for rejecting the Lord Jesus, whom can you blame? *What excuse can you make?* How will you bear *your own bitter reflections*, or endure the

endless lashings of an honest but guilty conscience? My dear friend, do listen to one who wishes you well; to one who desires to see you happy in this world, and happy in that which is to come: do reflect upon the life you are living, the course you are pursuing, and the end that you are likely to make. To *you* a Saviour is made known,—to *you* his invitation is given,—for *you* his blood will avail,—by *you* all the blessings of salvation may be enjoyed,—and on *you* endless glory may yet be conferred. And you *must* be either happy beyond description, as the result of receiving Christ; or be miserable beyond conception, as the consequence of rejecting him! There is no alternative, one or the other it *must be*.

“Christ is the only way to God,
No other path we need:
The voice of pardon, through his blood,
Brings heavenly news indeed!

Come all who feel yourselves undone,
To this great sacrifice;
Come rest your souls on Christ alone,
He'll bear you to the skies.

This is the way from death and hell,
The way to heaven and God;
The soul that trusts him here shall dwell
In his divine abode.”



THE LOVE OF CHRIST.

NOTHING is so powerful as love, but it can only influence us through faith. However much a person may love me, it would have no influence except I believe it. Just so it is with sinners. They read of the love of Jesus, they hear of that love, but it does not affect them, just because they do not believe that it applies to them. The love of Jesus is the most wonderful subject known in the universe, and yet it has no influence upon thousands, because they do not believe it. The apostle John could say, "We have known and believed the love which God hath to us; God is love." But very few can honestly say this. The Lord Jesus himself said, "God so loved *the world*, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Paul could say, "The love of Christ constraineth us."

Now, suppose the working classes did *really believe* that the Lord Jesus Christ *loved them*,—that he realised their misery

and read their doom,—and in order to save them therefrom, took their nature, and died in their stead,—must it not powerfully affect them? Would they not hear of him with reverence, think of him with gratitude, trust in him with confidence, speak of him with feeling, and obey him with cheerfulness? Surely they would. If, therefore, they are not affected with the love of Christ, it is because they do not believe it. How important, then, is faith? And if Jesus loves us, if he tells us so in his word, and if he has proved it by dying in our stead, must it not grieve him when we refuse to believe the love which he has to us? Without faith it is impossible to please him; for until we believe him, we treat him as if his word was not worthy of credit, or, to use the apostle's strong language, we "*make him a liar.*"

Reader, if Jesus had no love for you, would he send his servants to warn you, and his witnesses to assure you? And if he has thus proved his love, ought you not to believe it? And if you do not, are you not guilty of a great crime? A crime for which you *can find* no excuse, and for which you *can never* answer at his judgment-seat where you *must* appear? What

ingratitude to treat his love with contempt ! What folly to expose oneself to his wrath for despising his loving word ! What criminality must that be which made even the loving Paul to say, " If *any man* love not our Lord Jesus Christ, *let him be accursed* when the Lord cometh !"

But if I believe that Jesus loves me,—if I receive his precious invitations,—if I believe his faithful promises,—if I rest upon the truthfulness of his word,—have I not enough to make me happy ? Suppose my fellow-sinners hate me,—suppose they persecute me,—suppose they sneer at me,—suppose they affect to pity me,—what then ? If the King of kings loves me,—if the Son of God manifests himself to me,—all must be well ; and he says, " I love them that love me." The love of Jesus is like the bow in the cloud in the day of storms, it assures me of safety ; it is like the flowing fountain in the dreary desert, it assures me of supply ; it is like the bright sun in a dark world, it enlightens, enlivens, and warms me ; it is like the harmony of heaven, brought to cheer the *solitude and gloom* of earth. Love of *Jesus ! fill my heart, occupy my thoughts, feast my intellect, inflame my zeal, animate*

my hopes, brighten my prospects, and fill me to overflowing with holiness and love to him again! Reader, I can wish you nothing better than that you may "know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge," and so be "filled with all the fulness of God."

"Sinners, exposed to endless woe,
Arise, and to King Jesus go,
Your guilt confess, his favour seek,
And wait to hear what God will speak.

Fear not the law, 'tis grace that reigns,
Jesus the sinner's cause maintains;
He ransom'd rebels with his blood,
And now he intercedes with God.

To him approach with fervent prayer,
And if you perish, perish there,
Resolved at Jesus' feet to lie,
Suing for mercy, till you die.

Doubt not, but venture near his throne,
And make your supplications known;
Tell him the cause of all your grief,
And he will grant you quick relief.

Thrice happy souls, who thus address
The God of love and boundless grace!
Jesus will such completely save,
And life eternal they shall have.





THE WEAVER'S SHUTTLE.

THE weaver's trade is ancient and important. It employs a multitude of hands, and adds greatly to our comfort. Weavers are, therefore, a useful and valuable class of men. They increase the wealth of the nation, and add to its prosperity. They ought to be cared for, and their welfare, both spiritual and temporal, should be sought. Let us, therefore, say a few words to weavers. Come, brother, sit down, and for five minutes hear what I have to say. Let me speak to you in love, and try to interest your mind on an important subject. You know more about the shuttle than I do, you are well acquainted with its use, and constantly observe its rapidity. Job had seen it at work, and when speaking of the brevity of life, and the rapidity of time, he said, "My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle." (Job vii. 6.)

Life is short. Time soon flies away.
We are hasting to an unseen and unchangeable state. Time is given us to prepare

for eternity. Life in this world is only introductory to life in another. How many *weavers* die every year. How many die without hope. They live thoughtless lives. If they have plenty of work, good wages, and jolly companions, they care for nothing more. They are careless about their souls, they trifle with eternity. This betrays the greatest folly. They ought to "seek first the kingdom of God,"—they should "strive to enter in at the strait gate,"—they should "lay up for themselves treasures in heaven." Time flies like the shuttle; the last month, the last week, the last day, the last hour, the last minute, will soon come; and "after this the judgment." "Now is the accepted time, behold, now is the day of salvation." But it will soon be said to every one of us, *to you* "there shall be time no longer." As time leaves us, eternity finds us. Oh, then, every time you think of the shuttle, think of the brevity of life, and the rapidity of time.

The swiftness of the shuttle preaches *activity*. Let us not sleep as do others. Let us be active in securing the salvation of our own souls, and then in doing good *to all that are about us*. It is no time to *loiter*. There is much to be done, and

few hands to do it. Trade is brisk and wages are high. Let us therefore be up betimes and be diligently employed. Let us not rest for one day, while there is any doubt about our own personal salvation, but "let us *labour* to enter into gospel rest." Let us "give *all diligence* to make our calling and election sure." Let us rather make assurance doubly sure, than be satisfied with insufficient evidence. And having made our own salvation sure, let us be active, and never lie down to mental slumber, while there is an unconverted weaver in the town, in the county, in Great Britain, or in the world. Up, brother weavers, and show yourselves men. Work while it is called to-day, for "*the night cometh* when no man can work."

The shuttle preaches *energy*, energetic action. Just such as the Saviour recommends for ourselves. "*Agonise* to enter in at the strait gate." Put forth all your strength, throw all your energy into it. Wrestle with God. Resist Satan. Strive against the spirit, maxims, and customs of the world. "Lay hold on eternal life." Just such, too, as the Apostle put forth for *others*. "*Whereunto* I also labour, striving *according* to his working, which worketh in

me mightily." (Col. i. 29.) Weavers should be men of energy, and so should Christians. The times require energetic men. The church calls for energetic men. The world will only be moved by men of energy. Ye godly weavers, go forth among your fellows. Speak for Christ. Set your hearts upon winning their souls for the Saviour. By kindness and gentleness, by activity and energy, by perseverance and prayer, by benevolence and generosity, strive to bring them to the Saviour; and as a stimulus often read over the apostle's words, "Let him know, that he which converteth a sinner from the error of his way, *shall save a soul from death*, and shall hide a multitude of sins."

My friend, are you a thoughtless weaver? Let me beg of you for once to think, to think seriously for a few moments. If you persevere in your present course you *will* perish, you *must* be lost; but you *may* be saved. No power under heaven can hinder your being saved. No one can ruin you but yourself. Only take *the right direction*, and persevere in the good old way, and you, a poor weaver, shall shine forth *as the sun in the kingdom of your Heavenly Father*. You shall exchange the loom for

The Weaver's Shuttle.

few hands to do it. Trade is brisk and wages are high. Let us therefore be up betimes and be diligently employed. Let us not rest for one day, while there is any doubt about our own personal salvation, but "let us labour to enter into gospel rest." Let us "give all diligence to make our calling and election sure." Let us rather make assurance doubly sure, than being made our own salvation sure. And be active, and never lie down to men's slumber, while there is an unconverted weaver in the town, in the county, in Great Britain, or in the world. Up, brethren, and show yourselves men. While it is called to-day, for "the cometh when no man can work."

The shuttle preaches energy, energy, energy. Just such as the Saviour mends for ourselves. "Agonise to at the strait gate." Put forth strength, throw all your energy. Wrestle with God. Resist the devil, against the spirit of the world. Just such as the Saviour mends for others. Just such as the Saviour mends for ourselves.

ne mightily." (Col. i. 29.) Weavers should be men of energy, and so should Christians. The times require energetic men. The church calls for energetic men. The world will only be moved by men of energy. Ye godly weavers, go forth among your fellows. Speak for Christ. Set your hearts upon winning their souls for the Saviour. By kindness and gentleness, by activity and energy, by perseverance and prayer, by benevolence and generosity, strive to bring them to the Saviour; and as a stimulus often read over the apostle's words, "Let him know, that he which converteth a sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."

My friend, are you a thoughtless weaver? Let me ask you for once to think, to pause for a few moments. If you follow your present course you *will* be lost; but you *may* be saved. No one can ruin you. Only take *the right direction*—the good old way, and you shall shine forth for your Heavenly Father to praise the loom for

a harp of gold; the workshop for a mansion; the dirty streets of the manufacturing town for the streets of the New Jerusalem, which are of pure gold like unto transparent glass; the company of your work-fellows, whether pleasant or disagreeable, for the company of patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, and the Son of God himself. You shall have an inheritance for your own, which "is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away," which is reserved in heaven for all that believe in Jesus and live for his glory. A poor weaver may be exalted above the greatest monarch. What say you? Will you rise from poverty to plenty, from toil to pleasure, from thralldom to liberty, from what you now complain of, to the possession of what will fully and eternally satisfy you? You *may*; you are invited to do so. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Acquaint yourself with God in Christ, and be at peace. All the bliss of heaven, all the glories of eternity, are before you; up and possess the good land. Believe, repent, pray, obey the Saviour and all is yours, *and yours for ever!*



AFFECTION BAFFLED.

I HAVE a great liking to a village grave-yard, and seldom do I visit a country village but one of my first walks is to the grave-yard. The sight leads one's thoughts back to the past, and reflection is profitable; and from the past one looks forward to the future, when the dead, small and great, shall stand before God, and who can meditate upon that period without benefit? If we reflect upon the darkness of the past, we bless God for the light of the glorious gospel which we now enjoy; and if we think of the decisions of the future, we heartily pray to be found in Christ, and to stand accepted before God's throne. As we walk over the dust of the dead, we think of what they may have been, and of what we ourselves shall soon be. They lie in silence, and are most of them forgotten; we shall also soon be committed to our mother earth, and, except by a few tenderly attached friends, be remembered no more below.

A short time ago I went to preach in

the village of Thurleigh, in Bedfordshire, and, as usual, soon strolled into the church-yard : nothing particular struck my mind at first, but I felt, as I often do in such places, a seriousness spread over my spirit. I walked among the long, rank grass, and read an inscription here and there ; at length I was struck with the number of stones bearing the same family name. Each family seemed to have claimed a separate piece, and each appeared determined to perpetuate its name. But as I went toward one corner of the yard, I saw a number of stones, but not one word was legible on any of them ; I tried, but could not decipher a word, time had erased the whole. Well, thought I, if affection placed these stones here, and the design was to perpetuate the names and good deeds of the departed, affection is completely baffled, for wind and weather have blotted out all. A durable material had been chosen, the letters had been deeply cut, the paint, or perhaps the gilt, had been laid on, but all was of no avail, the whole inscription was erased. Tradition may have handed down a few meagre particulars to a *remaining friend* or relative ; but, with this *exception*, the name was no more remem-

bered in the village. The family had died out, or had emigrated to some other place, or were sunk into poverty.

Well, thought I, here is a lesson-book, and here are lessons to be learned. Let us be kind and attentive to our relatives while we have them: many, it is to be feared, who fail to perform their duty to their friends while they live, try to make up for this neglect by erecting a grave-stone for them when they are dead. The good that we do to the living will be remembered; but such acts for the dead will pass into oblivion. Let kindness carve our names on the hearts of the living, and they will carry the inscription beyond the bounds of this earth and the limits of time. Acts of kindness shown to God's saints are recorded in heaven, and the record will endure through eternal ages. We are always engaged in erecting monuments, either to our honour or disgrace. Every poor Christian that you relieve, every sorrowful soul that you comfort, every widow whose wants you supply, every orphan child whose tears you dry, will become a living monument, having inscribed upon it your good deeds, *and there they will be read for ever.* *You need not keep a record of them, such*

works will follow you, and will be mentioned to your honour before assembled worlds by the Judge of all (Matt. xxv. 34, 40). Let every one remember, that he is raising his own monument, and is writing his own epitaph, and that both will be preserved to all eternity. Whatever we write by our conduct is permanent, nothing can erase a letter but the blood of Christ, and that only erases the bad from those to whom it is applied. What appears transient to us is permanent before God; the volumes written in time will be read in eternity; the works performed in this world will be remembered in the next.

Brethren, let us not trouble about a grave-stone, or be anxious to have our names engraved on perishable materials, in characters that may be erased; but let it be our concern to have our names written in heaven. If written in the Lamb's book of life, if registered by the finger of God as born from above, the entry will remain for ever. There are no erasures there. No destructive elements, no mischievous beings, can ever affect them there; they are more *durable* than the deepest sculpture in the *most lasting* material; more durable than *if written with an iron pen in lead, in the*

the rock for ever. Let us, then, make our calling and our election sure. Let us never be satisfied until we obtain satisfactory evidence that our names are written on the heart of Jesus, and sculptured on his hands. And if we carry about with us this assurance, we may smile upon the attempts of our foes to mar our fair fame, or cast dishonour on our names; for we know that our God will bring us forth to the light, and we shall behold his righteousness. Let us imitate the conduct of Him who, though rich by nature, honourable by descent, spotless in character, and whose life was crowded with deeds of mercy and of might, lay in a borrowed grave, and never had a tomb-stone. But though he had no sculptured stone to mark the place of his burial, he had what was infinitely better—he had his name engraved on myriads of human hearts, his praises sounded by all the hosts of angelic tongues, and the highest seat in glory awarded him by his righteous and delighted Father. Like him, let us go about doing good. Like him, let us minister to the poor, the sick, and the broken hearted. Like him, let us be known as the poor man's friend, the brother born for adversity. Like him, let

us spend our health, our strength, our wealth, and every talent, to glorify God and do sinners good. Then, though persecuted by bitter foes, though misrepresented by the selfish throng, though cast out as unfit to live, we may cheerfully say with Job, "My witness is in heaven, and my record is on high."

Let us, then, make it our daily care to do what is worth recording, and leave the recording of it to others. Let us aim to have a name in God's book, a name among God's saints, and a name in God's world, for aiming at his glory, walking by his word, and endeavouring to do the greatest amount of good to his creatures. In our grave-yards we often read what is silly, what is erroneous, and what is false; but if we live for God's glory and the good of our fellow-men, if we live with eternity before us and the love of Christ is our hearts, if we live as those that must give an account, and whose desire is "to do it with joy and not with grief," we shall have an inscription that is wise, correct, and truthful; an inscription which angels will admire and saints read with pleasure; an *inscription* on which the beams of the Sun of Righteousness will ever rest, one letter

of which eternity will never obliterate, and which will be placed before God's throne for ever. This will gratify our kindest friends, satisfy our largest desires, and please the benevolent heart of our beneficent Redeemer. Saviour, let my heart be thy monument, deeply engrave on it thy love; let my life reflect the glory of thy grace, and be a close copy of thine own; let my death bring honour to thy cause, and my endless employment be praising thy name! Blessed be God for a good hope through grace, and the prospect of a glorious immortality.

“Encourage my heart with thy smile,
My ever unchangeable Friend;
Each season of darkness beguile,
And let me exult in the end.

'Tis better to suffer and die
Beneath thy compassionate rod;
Than feel my enjoyments run high,
But never have thee for my God.

I would not contend with thy will,
Whatever that will may decree;
But oh, may each trial I feel
Unite me more firmly to thee.”



A NEW YEAR'S MOTTO.

"Look up."—LUKE xxi. 28.

GREAT and sore troubles preceded the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, and great and sore troubles will precede the second coming of our beloved Lord. The time of his coming approaches, and it becomes his disciples to think of that event, and diligently prepare for it. But if we do not witness the descent of our Lord in the clouds, death will soon come and usher us into his presence; and before that we may be exposed to many and painful troubles, so that the direction given by our Lord to his disciples may be just suitable, "*Then look up*" (Luke xxi. 28). We are entering upon a new year, we shall have new toils, new trials, new temptations, and new troubles; but whenever they come let us "*look up*." And, with a view to encourage our souls to do so, let us, at the opening of the year, consider,—
First, the seasons to which this advice is

applicable. There may be national calamities ; as pestilence, famine, or war ; but whatever comes upon the nation, the Christians in it should "*look up.*" There may be persecution ; servants may lose their places, mechanics their employment, labourers their situations, cottagers their cottages, and children many of their comforts, for Christ's and conscience' sake ; while the sword of the magistrate is sheathed, the pen, the tongue, the frowning countenance, persecutes some ; the withholding employment or custom persecutes others ; but if persecution should rage against any of us this year, let us "*look up.*" Providence may frown and throw us into perplexity and difficulty ; losses and crosses may become almost our daily lot ; we may think that God is turned against us, and that everything is contrary to us ; but when our circumstances are most trying, when our souls are ready to faint within us, then let us remember the Lord has engaged for us by promise and by covenant, and let us "*look up.*" We may be called to change our places, and leave dear friends and connections behind us ; or, what is worse, our friends may be alienated from us, and turn against us ; but if every friend frown



A NEW YEAR'S MOTTO.

"Look up."—LUKE xxi. 28.

GREAT and sore troubles preceded the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, and great and sore troubles will precede the second coming of our beloved Lord. The time comes his disciples to think of that even and diligently prepare for it. But if the clouds, death will soon come and us into his presence; and before the may be exposed to many and troubles, so that the direction given Lord to his disciples may be just *"Then look up"* (Luke xxi. 28). entering upon a new year, we shall new toils, new trials, new temptations "look up," but whenever we have courage.

applicable. There may be national calamities; as pestilence, famine, or war; but whatever comes upon the nation, the Christians in it should "*look up.*" There may be persecution; servants may lose their places, mechanics their employment, labourers their situations, cottagers their cottages, and children many of their comforts, for Christ's and conscience' sake; while the sword of the magistrate is sheathed, the pen, the tongue, the frowning countenance, persecutes some; the withholding employment or custom persecutes others; but if persecution should rage against any of us this year, let us "*look up.*" Providence may frown and throw us into perplexity and difficulty; losses and crosses may become almost our daily lot; we may think that God is against us, and that every thing is adverse to us; but when our circumstances are most trying, when our souls faint within us, then let us remember that the Lord has engaged for us by covenant, and let us "*look up.*" Called to change our friends and connections, if worse, our enemies, from us, and our friends frown

upon us, even if father and mother forsake us, or if we be removed to the ends of the earth, let us remember that our God is the same to us, and that he is ever near us; therefore let us "*look up.*" If death should enter in at our windows, and take away the desire of our eyes with a stroke; if our parents should die, our children be removed, or our wives or husbands be laid in the grave; though lover and friend be removed far from us, and our acquaintance into darkness, still, whatever death may do, let us determine that we will "*look up.*" If darkness becloud our evidences, obscure our path, and throw its gloom over our minds; if discouragement brood over our souls, or place stumbling-blocks in our way; if all our past experience appear questionable, and our acceptance with God at present doubtful, still let us not give way or yield to despondency, but let us "*look up.*" If thrown on the bed of sickness, racked with pain and fainting with weakness; if death stand before us, and the grave appear ready for us; if eternity throws its revealing light upon us, or draw *back its curtain* to us, let us not tremble, or shake with fear, or ask, "How can I *come before the Lord?*" but let us "*look*

up." In whatever state, in whatever place, into whatever condition we may be brought this year, let us seek grace to follow our Lord's loving advice, and "*look up.*" We will now notice,—

Secondly, *the direction* our Saviour gives — "*Then look up.*" Look not back, as Lot's wife did. Look not within, as too many do. Look not around, as David did. But "*look up.*" Look up to God; he is your Father, your Friend, your Saviour. He *can* help you. He *will* help you. He says, "Look unto me, and be delivered; for I am God." Many did so of old, as David testifies,—"*They looked unto him, and were lightened; and their faces were not ashamed.*" Look up for light to guide you, and the everlasting light will shine upon you. Look up for grace to sanctify you, and the grace of Jesus will be found sufficient for you. Look up for strength to enable you to do and suffer God's will, and his strength will be made perfect in your weakness. Look up for comfort to cheer you, and as one whom his mother comforteth, so will the Lord comfort you. Look up for courage to embolden you, and *the Lord will give courage to the faint, and to them that have no might he will in-*

crease strength. Look up for patience to keep you, and the God of patience and consolation will enable you quietly to bear the heaviest burden, and silently to endure the most painful affliction. Look up for providence to supply you, and the barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail; but God shall supply all your need, according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus. Look up in faith, exercising confidence in the word of a faithful God. Look up in prayer, asking for what God has graciously promised. Look up in hope, expecting what you ask in the name of Jesus. Look up with adoration, and adore the sovereignty, righteousness, and wisdom of God; thus honour God and he will honour you. Look up constantly, let nothing daunt or discourage you; rather say, "Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their master, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, *until that he have mercy upon us.*" Look up, for this will keep the head from swimming, the heart from sinking, the knees from trembling, the *feet from slipping*, and the hands from *hanging down*. Look up, for God bids

you. Look up, for Jesus is looking down upon you.

Well, my friends, what say you? Will you follow this advice? Will you take this counsel? Will you act upon this direction? He who loves you best, who knows you most, and who always wishes you well, gave it. Take it, and you will never regret it. Act upon it, and you will never repent of it. It is impossible to say what will happen to us, or what will be required of us this year; but this direction, if properly attended to, will procure for us all that we need, secure us against all that we dread, or make us more than a match for all our foes and fears. Fellow-christian, are you fearful? "*look up*," and hear Jesus saying to you, "Fear not, I will help thee." Are you discouraged? "*look up*," and your youth shall be renewed like the eagle's, and fresh light, comfort, and courage shall be given you. Are you desponding? "*look up*," for Jesus never breaks the bruised reed, nor quenches the smoking flax. Don't look too much at sin, look at the infinitely meritorious blood of God's dear Son; don't look too much at *self*, but look at Jesus, who ever lives to *make intercession* for you in heaven. Are

you stripped of your comforts, your props, and your goods? "*then look up*," he who stripped you, loves you; he will be more than all these to you; he will bind up your broken heart, calm your perturbed spirit, cheer your drooping mind, and fill you with his own peace and happiness. Look up *for* all you want—*from* all you fear—*through* all that would obstruct your way—and *notwithstanding* all that would deter you from doing so. Look up every day, saying with David, "My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and *will look up*." Look up in every trial, saying with another, "*I will lift up mine eyes* unto the hills, from whence cometh my help: my help cometh from the Lord, who made heaven and earth." Look not at sin, it will discourage you; look not at self, it will distress you; look not at Satan, he will bewilder you; look not to men, they will deceive you; look not to means, they will disappoint you; look not at trials, they will deject you; but do as the church did, "look up "until the Lord look down *and behold from heaven*" (Lam. iii. 50).

Look only, look always, look intently, to Jesus; run looking, work looking, fight

looking, suffer looking, live looking, and die looking, to Jesus, who is at God's right hand in glory. Oh, look, look, look to Jesus !

“ Behold the Lamb of God, who bore
Thy burdens on the tree ;
And paid in blood the dreadful score,
The ransom due for thee !

Look to him till the sight endears
The Saviour to thy heart ;
His pierced feet bedew with tears,
Nor from his cross depart.

Look to him till his dying love
Thy ev'ry thought control ;
Its vast constraining influence prove
O'er body, spirit, soul.

Look to him, as the race you run,
Your never failing Friend ;
Finish he will the work begun,
And grace in glory end.”





THE PRAYER OF MOSES.

"Return, O Lord, how long?"—Ps. xc. 13.

Who sighed Moses, the man of God, when Israel was wandering in the desert, when death was sweeping away from the earth the rebellious generation which came out of Egypt, and when God, to a great extent, kept at a distance from them. And so may we, under our present depressing, discouraging circumstances, as the visible church of Christ. God has covered the daughter of Zion with a cloud: and he has covered himself with a cloud, so that our prayers will not pass through. We sigh and cry, but he seems to shut out our prayer; we mourn his absence, but he does not favour us with his presence as we desire and wish to enjoy it. The prayer of Moses is ours; yes, beloved, we are crying out, "Return, O Lord, how long?"

What is the cause of this exclamation? Why do we thus pray? Because we are *not favoured* with those sweet, soul-melting *joys which the Lord's people used to enjoy.*

One branch of God's kingdom was, "joy in the Holy Ghost." One characteristic of the believer was, that he "rejoiced in Christ Jesus." The disciples "were filled with joy and with the Holy Ghost." Once, in our experience, his doctrine dropped as the rain, and his communications distilled as the dew. We sat under his shadow with delight, and his fruit was sweet unto our taste. But where are those joys now? When do we enjoy such precious seasons? Where are the people that are in such a case? Alas, generally speaking, we are cold, hard, lifeless, and unspiritual; therefore, we may well cry, "Return, O Lord, how long?" Again, the sanctifying influences of the blessed Spirit do not attend the word as they once did. Time was when the preacher could say to his people, "We all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." By the ordinances, the Lord sanctified his people. The covetous became liberal,—the proud became humble,—the idle became industrious,—the self-indulgent learned to practise self-denial,—the earthly-minded became spiritual, a gradual, progressive,

but marked change took place in them; but now professors remain very much what they were, which makes us exclaim, "Return, O Lord, how long?" Once more, the saving operations of the quickening Spirit are withheld. Once sinners were converted by thousands: great multitudes both of the Jews and also of the Greeks believed. The hand of the Lord was with his servants, and multitudes were turned unto the Lord. The Lord added to the church *daily* such as should be saved. The gospel was accompanied with an invincible power, and the hearers were born again by the word of truth. The gospel came not in word only, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power. Now how few are really converted to God; and even in the converted how slight the work appears. Once the soul was like softened wax, and the image of Christ was deeply impressed upon it; now it is rather like drawing paper, and the likeness of Jesus is only seen drawn in faint outline upon it. Well, therefore, may we cry, "Return, O Lord, how long?"

And we do so, because we can find no *substitute* for the divine presence. We *have* learning, eloquence, argument, pa-

thetic appeal, earnest entreaty, and loving tenderness; but all will not do, things remain just as they were. We can be satisfied with nothing less than the presence of God. We value the servants, but we want the Master. We prize the instruments, but we long for the divine Agent. We have the wells, but we want the living, the life-giving water. And all will go to decay except the Lord return. In many places our churches decrease, our congregations dwindle, our pastors are dispirited, and dull discontent pervades all the living in our Jerusalem. These things make us cry, and cry with painful earnestness, "Return, O Lord, how long?"

But what answer may we suppose that the Lord will give to many of us? Perhaps he may say, that he will not return as we desire until we separate from the world as he has bidden us. His word is, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate." But, like Ephraim of old, we have mixed ourselves among the people. Politics, speculations, carnal associations, and a worldly mind have led us astray; so that there is but very little difference between us and those who know not God. *He requires us to stand out in bold relief*

from the world ;—to be distinct and distinguishable ;—to be like a city set upon a hill, which cannot be hid. While professors have balls, dances, concerts, &c., we shall be left to cry, “ O Lord, how long ? ” Again, we may not expect him to return until we realize the end of our vocation. We are called with a heavenly calling. We are called to glory and virtue. Our vocation or calling is, to publish and preserve God’s truth,—to represent and set forth the true nature of Christ’s holy religion,—to endeavour to pluck sinners as brands from the burning, and lead them on to glory, honour, immortality, and eternal life,—to live for God,—to live like Jesus,—to aim at the honour of God in everything we do,—to live as saints, or unearthly persons, who are born from above, buried with Christ, risen with Christ, ascended with Christ, and identified with Christ,—the temples of the Holy Ghost—the companions of God the Father, and of his Son Jesus Christ, with whom we profess to live in close, constant, and sensible fellowship,—to make God’s glory the one great end of our existence, so that, whether we think or *speak, rest or work, worship or visit, eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, we do all to*

the glory of God. We may not expect the Lord to return until we stir up ourselves to take hold upon him. Like Jacob we must go out into the plain, and there wrestle with God. Like Elijah we must go to the top of Carmel, and there plead until we prevail. Like Hezekiah we must turn our faces to the wall, and pray until God yields to us. Like the disciples at Emmaus we must constrain him to turn in and abide with us. Brethren, let us remember, that the energetic prayer of the righteous man availeth much; that God will attend to his own elect when they cry day and night unto him, though he may seem to hold out long. Let us, therefore, stir up ourselves to take hold on him, and give him no rest until he bow the heavens and come down, and work wonders in our midst.

Do we *feel* this to be our state? Is God at a distance from us? Are the ordinances comparatively barren? Is the gospel almost without effect? Are our churches and ministers at a loss to know what to do? Do we pant and long for a change? Is this the rooted, reigning, abiding desire of our souls? Can we be satisfied with no *less*? Are we becoming impatient and passionately crying out,—“Return, O Lord.

how long?" Or can we be still, silent, and comparatively indifferent under such a state of things? Brethren, the Spirit of God is grieved, and *we* have grieved him! Our heavenly Father's heart is wounded, and we have wounded it! Our adorable Saviour has been crucified afresh, and *we* have crucified him! These things call for deep thought, for bitter tears, for daily repentance, for fervent prayers, for frank confession, for earnest pleadings, and for immediate reformation. Do we *feel* upon this subject as we ought to feel? Do *you*? Do we act under the circumstances as we ought to act? Do *you*? God refuses to be considered the author or the cause of these things, therefore he demands of us, "Is the Spirit of the Lord straitened? *Are these his doings?* Do not my words do good unto him that walketh uprightly?" Can we have walked uprightly, then? Impossible, or God would not withhold his presence from us! Hear his own word, "The Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord will give grace and glory; *no good thing will be withheld from them that walk uprightly.*"



A SOURCE OF COMFORT.

"Your Father also is merciful."—LUKE vi. 36.

JESUS revealed Jehovah as a father. He constantly kept this idea before the minds of his disciples. He turned their thoughts from his greatness to his goodness. He taught them to realize that he was *their* Father. They were to pray to him as such. To trust in him as such. To love him as such. To obey him as such. He was here setting forth his moral excellencies for their imitation. He commands them to be merciful, as their Father also is merciful. There is something very precious in this representation of the Most High. He is our Father. As such, he is not only great, glorious, omnipotent, and just, but he is merciful. Naturally, infinitely, eternally merciful. He is merciful to all, but more especially to his children. Yea, he delighteth to manifest his mercy to them. He is merciful *this day, and he will be merciful to us through all our future days.*

you stripped of your comforts, your props, and your goods? "*then look up*," he who stripped you, loves you; he will be more than all these to you; he will bind up your broken heart, calm your perturbed spirit, cheer your drooping mind, and fill you with his own peace and happiness. Look up *for* all you want—*from* all you fear—*through* all that would obstruct your way—and *notwithstanding* all that would deter you from doing so. Look up every day, saying with David, "My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and *will look up*." Look up in every trial, saying with another, "*I will lift up mine eyes* unto the hills, from whence cometh my help: my help cometh from the Lord, who made heaven and earth." Look not at sin, it will discourage you; look not at self, it will distress you; look not at Satan, he will bewilder you; look not to men, they will deceive you; look not to means, they will disappoint you; look not at trials, they will deject you; but do as the church did, "look up "until the Lord look down *and behold from heaven*" (Lam. iii. 50). *Look only, look always, look intently, to Jesus; run looking, work looking, fight*

looking, suffer looking, live looking, and die looking, to Jesus, who is at God's right hand in glory. Oh, look, look, look to Jesus !

“ Behold the Lamb of God, who bore
Thy burdens on the tree ;
And paid in blood the dreadful score,
The ransom due for thee !

Look to him till the sight endears
The Saviour to thy heart ;
His pierced feet bedew with tears,
Nor from his cross depart.

Look to him till his dying love
Thy ev'ry thought control ;
Its vast constraining influence prove
O'er body, spirit, soul.

Look to him, as the race you run,
Your never failing Friend ;
Finish he will the work begun,
And grace in glory end.”



Israel." It may only be the desire to labour for him, without the power. The wish to be useful, without the opportunity. A little zeal for him. A little love to him. A little faith in him. A little sorrow that we have grieved him. A little kindness to some one of his people,—the giving of a cup of cold water only. The speaking a word for him. Whatever good there is in us, generated by his Holy Spirit (and there is no good but what the ever blessed Spirit does produce), he notices, approves, commends, records, and fosters. Man may overlook it. We may think little of it. Not so our merciful Father; it is precious in his sight, and is highly esteemed by him. How different prejudiced man! One fault hides ten virtues; for one spot, he overlooks a score beauties. Oh, to resemble our ever merciful Father, in noticing and admiring what is good in his children. If our Father also is merciful, then *he will accept the smallest thing from us*. The child has but little to offer, only some common field flower, or some mean production of art; but he brings it in love, he presents it to his father with a smile, he seems to say, "I wish it were *gold, or some rich gem*," and the father receives it gladly, and is pleased with it.

Just so our ever loving Father who is in heaven. What can we bring him? What have we to present to him? It is, perhaps, only a loving wish, or a grateful acknowledgement, or a song of praise, or a poor sinful prayer. But it is what we have, and the Lord accepts it with more pleasure than he does Gabriel's services, or Michael's obedience. He says, "My child would bring me something worthy of me if he had it; but as he has it not, I accept the will for the deed." If there be first a willing mind, "it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not." If our Father also is merciful, then *he will suffer no real evil to befall us*. He can prevent it, and he will. Afflictions are not always evils. Rather, sanctified afflictions are amongst our choicest mercies, our most efficient teachers. David had many, sore, and long continued afflictions, but were they evils? Oh, no, blessings; therefore he writes, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted." And again, "I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me." Solomon long since wrote, and providence has ever since proved the truth of the saying, "*There shall no evil happen to the*

just." We have been tried. We have been cast down. We have been stripped. We have been disappointed. We have been painfully humbled. Our hearts have often bled, for they have been often and deeply pierced. But has any real evil befallen us? Can we bring this charge against our most merciful Father? Shall we be able to do so in heaven? No, never! Never! If our Father also is merciful, then *he will have us love one another for his sake*. He loves all his children. He pities every one of his family. He bids us love every one of our brothers and sisters. It is his will that we should love each other. It is our happiness to love one another. We cannot be like our Father, if we do not love all his children. If we do not love them always. If we do not love them with a warm and glowing love. Oh, for more love to the Lord's people!

If God is our Father, and our Father also is merciful, what a source of comfort is opened to us. We know not what awaits us. We know not what we may have to pass through. But let what will come, we shall have *one to love us*, and one *whose love is infinite, unchangeable, and glorious*. Yes, our Father's heart will be

always set upon us, it will always be full of love to us, to do us good. We shall always have *one to care for us*. He will care for our persons to protect them, for our graces to foster them, and for our circumstances to adapt his mercies to them. The believer can never justly say, "No one cares for me," for his God cares for him; and his care is so efficient, that he is bidden to cast all his cares upon God, and enjoy peace, because God cares for him. We shall always have *one to provide for us*. We cannot be fatherless. We cannot be neglected. Our Father knows our wants, our weakness, and our dependent condition; he is ever merciful, his mercy is ever great towards us, and therefore our supplies are certain. This led the apostle to write so confidently to his kind-hearted Philippians and say, "My God shall supply *all your need*, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." If God is our merciful Father, let us *cherish the thought*. It is sweet. It is pleasant. It is profitable. It must do us good. How much better to think of our mercies, than our miseries; of our merciful Father, than of our malicious foes. Let us *improve the privilege*. Let us go to God as his children. Let us ask *of him as of a father*. Let us credit hi

word, rely on his care, rejoice in his mercy, wait at his footstool, work in his vineyard, trust in his faithfulness, and hasten home to be with him in glory everlasting for ever. Let us *honour the relationship*. Let us walk with God in holy fellowship, obey God with ardent zeal, imitate God with care and caution, and endeavour to exhibit the excellencies of his moral character in our conduct and conversation. Let us be holy, for God is holy. Let us be loving, for God is love. Let us be merciful, for our Father also is merciful. Let us attend to our Saviour's admonition, delivered with so much love when instructing his disciples on the mount, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Reader, is God your Father? Do you feel a child's love to him? Do you exercise filial confidence in him? Do you go to him for counsel, for supplies, for comfort, for all you need? Do you look upon him as merciful, and strive to imitate this excellence? Masters, are you merciful to your *men*? Men, are you merciful to your *fellow-men*? Mistresses, are you merciful to your servants? Servants, are you mer-

ciful to all about you? To be merciful you must not be unjust, or dishonest; but exercise mercy, every one toward another, consistently with the claims of kindred, and the requirements of God's holy precepts, as they bear upon the different relationships of life. Beloved, "be ye merciful, even as your Father which is in heaven is merciful."

"When all my past days to review
And ponder my ways I begin,
The farther the search I pursue,
I trace but corruption and sin.

Soon as from the womb I was brought,
My race was in evil begun,
My spirit with forwardness fraught,
And falsehood beguiled my tongue.

To manhood from youth as I grew,
My reason to passion, the slave,
As custom, as fashion still drew,
I rush'd down the steep to the grave.

My conscience, that monitor true,
Remonstrates, but little avails,
The good, which I would, I can't do.
The evil, I would not, prevails.

Then take me, Lord, such as I am,
And make me just what I should be,
I'll take to myself all the shame,
And give all the glory to thee."



HINDRANCES TO CONVERSION AND CHURCH MEMBERSHIP.

"Them that were entering in ye hindered."—

LUKE xl. 52.

THE Lord Jesus never brought an unjust charge against any, nor could he be charged with a want of charity, or with defective orthodoxy. His views were clear, his heart was kind, and yet he says to some, "Ye enter not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered." He refers to his kingdom, his church: some were affected, concerned, and thought of coming to him, and joining with him, but "they were hindered." Are any hindered now? Are there in our churches and congregations, those that hinder souls from coming to Christ, or joining with his people? We fear there are, and in every department of the church. Let us look,—

First, at the pulpit; what do we see there? Perhaps, the preacher is cold in his manner, perplexing in his style, and formal in his devotions,—this proves an hindrance to

many. They want to see warmth, to understand clearly, and to feel that while the preacher is in prayer, he is hearty, earnest, and desirous of their salvation. Unless our doctrine is sound, our manner energetic, our appeals pointed, our prayers fervent, and the whole unite to prove that we are in downright earnest, we shall hinder some. Let us look—

Secondly, at our deacons; what do we observe here? Are they men full of the Holy Ghost and of faith? Do they say, by their regular and early attendance, by their bland and pleasant manners, by their constant activity and attention to all who attend the place, that they desire the conversion of souls, and the increase of the church? Are they first at the prayer-meetings, first in the public services, making it evident that *their hearts are set* upon the prosperity of the cause? If not, they will hinder some. Next to the preacher, people look to the deacons to be grave, temperate, devout, active, and thoroughly devoted to God. But when deacons are worldly-minded, proud, lordly, cold, distant, and patronisers of worldly amusements and carnal pleasures, it must be said of them, "*Those that were entering in ye hindered.*"

We have heard of deacons who give balls, have dances, frequent concerts, and yet often neglect prayer-meetings, church-meetings, and visiting the sick; can it be any wonder, if the churches to which such deacons belong, dwindle, decline, become worldly, formal, and inactive? Let us look,—

Thirdly, at the members of our churches; and what meets us here? Here is one well known for his love of money and hard dealing; there is another who habitually gives way to his unholy temper; there is another who practises deception in business, because it is the custom of the trade; there is another who is never seen at the prayer-meeting; there is another so much like the world that if we did not see him at the Lord's table, we never could think that he made any profession of religion; there is another as cold as marble, to sit by whom is like coming into contact with an iceberg; and there is—but I forbear, let every one look into his own church; yea, let every one look into his own heart, and at his own conduct, and then say, "Is it any wonder *that our churches do not flourish?*" I fear *the professing church of Christ has much to answer for.* It will not do to resolve it

into the sovereignty of God alone. Prosperous times have been holy times, praying times, acting times. Ours are talking times, giving times, but something more is wanting. We have hosts of undecided persons in our congregations, and hosts of half-hearted persons in our churches. Many have attended our places for years, and have never been pointedly spoken to by one of our members as to the state of their souls. The minister preaches, but they never second his efforts. They seem to fancy that it is no part of their business. The gospel of Christ is hindered; the question is, *who hinders it?* Paul was deeply concerned lest he should (1 Cor. ix. 12); but many professors now have no concern about it. They live, and speak, and conduct themselves, as if it was no concern of theirs. Souls are hindered, but *who hinders them?* The lawyers did once, but other classes differing from the lawyers do now.

There is that marble statue that you see at the sermon but nowhere else, who speaks to no one, appears to care for no one,—he hinders. There is that covetous man, who *never comes to prayer-meeting lest he should miss taking sixpence*,—he hinders.

There is that glumpy, gloomy, uncouth professor,—he hinders. There is that light, vain, trifling professor,—he hinders. There is that proud, scornful, disdainful-looking character,—he hinders. There is that dressy body, who spends all God's money at the haberdashers and drapers, so that she has none left for God's cause,—she hinders. There is that tittle tattling, tale-bearing, scandalising woman,—she hinders. There is that inflammatory, fiery, scolding professor, she hinders. But where shall we end? Every inconsistent professor, who has not the mind of Christ, who does not copy his meekness, gentleness, activity, devotion, zeal, self-denial, and intense concern for the salvation of souls, in some measure hinders. Here is the cool and calculating, there the dashing and the daring; here the bold and conceited, there the fearful and shy; here the self-willed and lordly, there the close-fisted and covetous; and all these hinder, being stumbling-blocks in the way.

A church composed of such members resembles the rocky desert, not the pleasant garden; a cold ice-bound islet, not a beautiful sun-lit field; a barren plot covered with thorns, not a well-cultivated vineyard;

a shabby, rotten, miserable-looking hovel, not the well-built, roomy, cheerful dwelling. How can we expect people to admire, desire, or seek union with such a church? True, few may be *so bad*, but in proportion as they, in whole or in part, resemble it, they hinder. Our churches must be happy, and happy-making churches, if they are to flourish. There must be freedom, fellowship, love, unity, peace, individual interest, and united concern felt for all who come into the congregation, or can be induced to come in, before we can expect them to be what we desire to see them. Ministers may preach, authors may write books, lively Christians may inquire and complain, but something else is wanting. Every church-member must realise his responsibility, must agonize with God, must endeavour to persuade men, must lay aside whatever is forbidding and repulsive; and all must follow "whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest or venerable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report," before we can expect our wishes to be fulfilled.

Ministers must be holy, energetic, sim-

ple, sound in the faith, with their hearts set upon the conversion of sinners, and the edification of the saints, or, like the lawyers, *they will hinder*. Deacons must be spiritually-minded, active, sober, courteous, intent upon the church's prosperity, full of the Holy Ghost, and of faith, or *they will more or less hinder*. Church-members must continue steadfastly in the apostle's doctrine and fellowship, every one must take his own place and keep it, every one must ascertain what is his own work and do it; every eye must be fixed on God's glory, every heart must rest on Christ's finished work, every hand must be employed in God's service, and each must esteem others better than himself, no one seeking his own things, but every one the things which are Jesus Christ's, *or they will in some degree hinder*. Brethren, are we not more or less guilty? Do not our imperfections stare us in the face? Ought we not to humble ourselves deeply before God? Should we not set about an immediate reformation? Let us realize our sin, confess it before God, get it pardoned through the blood of Jesus, *set out afresh* in divine strength, purposing *most solemnly*, that the time past of our *lives shall suffice us* that we have wrought

the will of the Gentiles, and determine that, let others do as they will, we will be very careful lest it should be said of us, "*Them that were entering in ye hindered.*"

"Daughter of Zion, from the dust
Exalt thy fallen head ;
Again in thy Redeemer trust,—
He calls thee from the dead.

Awake, awake. put on thy strength,
Thy beautiful array ;
The day of freedom dawns at length,
The Lord's appointed day.

Rebuild thy walls, thy bounds enlarge,
And send thy heralds forth ;
Say to the south—' Give up thy charge,
And keep not back, O north.'

They come, they come : thine exiled bands,
Where'er they rest or roam,
Have heard thy voice in distant lands,
And hasten to their home.

Thus, though the universe shall burn,
And God his works destroy,
With songs thy ransom'd shall return,
And everlasting joy."



And Church Membership

he will of the Gentiles. *and*
 not let others *and* *and* *and*
 e very careful *and* *and* *and*
 1. "Then the *and* *and* *and*
 indeed."

"Laughter of the *and* *and* *and*
 From the *and* *and* *and*
 Again in the *and* *and* *and*
 He came last from the *and* *and* *and*

A wake, awake, put on thy *and* *and* *and*
 Thy beautiful *and* *and* *and*
 The cry of freedom *and* *and* *and*
 The Lord's *and* *and* *and*

Rebuild thy walls, the *and* *and* *and*
 And *and* *and* *and*
 Say to the *and* *and* *and*
 And *and* *and* *and*

ie
 he
 ted
 God,
 ab of
 al for
 is our
 enemy
 sprinkled
 and eter-
 in the
 the lock,
 bolts, how-
 blood. No
 for the in-
 on the con-
 messenger of
 it that the blood
 e! See to it that
 sprinkled on



THE SAFEGUARD.

"When I see the blood, I will pass over you."—
Exod. xii. 13.

THE period for Israel's deliverance from Egypt had now arrived. God was faithful to his word. But while he fulfils his promise, he instructs his people; and through them, he instructs his church in all ages. The first-born of Egypt are to be destroyed; but how shall Israel escape? A lamb was to be selected, separated, and slain; his blood was to be caught in a basin, and to be sprinkled on the side-posts and lintels of their doors; and God said, "*When I see the blood, I will pass over you.*" Blood! there is something repulsive in blood. Who can look upon it without a shudder? Yet blood is to be the means of Israel's safety. Beloved, God speaks to us. "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us." His blood is the blood of the new covenant. It cleanses from all sin, and it secures all it cleanses. Let us look at

This attractive object. Justice demands

blood. God acknowledges the equity of the demand. But if the sinner bleed, his blood makes no atonement; if, therefore, he die once, his unatoned guilt demands that he suffer the second death, or never-ending punishment. But here is blood that attracts the eye of Justice, meets all its claims, and satisfies all its demands. Precious blood! It is the blood of *the Lamb*, which taketh away the sin of the world. The Lamb of God, the accepted substitute for man! The Lamb of God, slain in the sinner's stead! The Lamb of God, who becomes the food of all for whom he was slain. His blood is our safety. Sprinkled upon the door, no enemy could pass through to harm us. Sprinkled upon the door, we are certainly and eternally safe! Our safety is not in the door, however strong; nor in the lock, however curious; nor in the bolts, however numerous; but in the blood. No blood on the door, no safety for the inhabitants within. No blood on the conscience, no safety from the messenger of death. Oh, reader, see to it that the blood of Christ is thy confidence! See to it that the *blood of Christ* is sprinkled on thy *soul!* For

God requires application. It was not enough that the Lamb was slain, roasted, and eaten, or that his blood was in the basin in the house. It must be on the door-posts and lintels. Nor is it enough for us that Jesus died, that he is gone into heaven, that his people feed upon him, that his blood is in his church; it *must* be applied to us. *God looks for the blood.* Every Israelite had blood on his door. God looked on every door and saw it, and then he passed over. My dear friend, God looks upon your heart, upon your conscience; but does he see the blood—the blood of his own dear Son there? If he does, he is satisfied, he is reconciled to you; but if there is no blood, there is no satisfaction, no reconciliation, no peace. He will accept of no sacrifices, however costly; he will hear no prayers, however earnest; he will regard no sufferings, however painful; he will receive no services, however scriptural in outward form, if they are intended to be a substitute for the blood. You may give all the substance of your house,—you may pray until your knees become like camels' hoofs,—you may *inflict sufferings* upon yourself until nature *faints* under them,—you may perform re-

ligious services without number and without end, but except the blood of Christ be applied to you, all is in vain. God is fully satisfied with the blood of his dear Son, and he is fully satisfied with every one that places his dependence on it; but he is satisfied with nothing without this. Oh, see to it, then, that your reliance is on the blood of Jesus alone! If any Israelite had substituted anything for the blood on the door, however costly, however beautiful, or however apparently reasonable, he must have perished; the destroying angel would not have passed over him. Trust, then, in the blood of Jesus alone, and see

The beneficial result. There was danger, for the minister of justice was going through the land. There was danger of violent death. So now, we are all in danger as sinners—in danger of the second death. But when the blood was sprinkled there was safety—perfect safety. So now, when the blood of Jesus is sprinkled on our consciences we are safe—eternally safe. God is then satisfied, for the law has received all it demands. He is pleased, for justice unites with mercy in our salvation. He is pledged to secure us, for his word is *passed*, and he is faithful to that word. *He says of all on whom he sees the blood.*

"They shall never perish. No weapon formed against them shall prosper. Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation; they shall not be ashamed or confounded, world without end." The blood-sprinkled Israelite is safe, distinguished, and happy; for when God sees the blood he passes over him.

See then, beloved, first, What we *all need*,—the blood, the precious blood of Jesus; for it is the blood alone that maketh atonement for the soul. In Jesus we have redemption *through his blood*, even the forgiveness of our sins. See, secondly, To what we should all look,—to the blood. Do you want pardon? Look to the blood! Do you want peace? Look to the blood! Do you want victory over Satan? Look to the blood! Do you want perfect safety in life and death? Then look to the blood! See, thirdly, In what we should *all trust*—in the blood. Not in our convictions, not in our comforts, not in our prayers, not in our sufferings; but in the blood of Jesus only should we trust, for access to God, acceptance with God, and safety from God. See, fourthly, Of what *we should boast*,—the blood. "God forbid," exclaimed the Apostle, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of

my Lord Jesus Christ." "God forbid," exclaims every true believer, "God forbid that I should boast of anything, save the glorious person, perfect work, and precious blood of my Lord Jesus Christ." See, fifthly, What we *should teach*,—the blood. In the pulpit, in the Sunday-school, and in the social circle, we should teach all to look to, trust in, and place entire dependance on, the blood of Jesus alone. Whether we speak, or whether we write, we should constantly say, "Not the crucifix, but the cross; not Mary, but Jesus; not men's works, but a Saviour's precious blood." See, finally, Of what we *should beware*,—of neglecting the blood of Jesus, of substituting anything for the blood of Jesus, of mixing anything with the blood of Jesus, or of thinking lightly of the blood of Jesus. It is precious blood! It is invaluable blood! Without it *no sinner* can be saved; with it, *any sinner* may. Oh, my soul, meditate on this blood; plead nothing before God, but this blood; teach nothing as the ground of acceptance with God, but this blood; depend on nothing for comfort or salvation, but this blood; look to nothing for peace in life or in death, but *this precious, precious blood!*



TOO LATE.

RETURNING from public worship yesterday morning, I met a young man, one of my hearers, in whose salvation I have long felt a deep interest, and for whose conversion I have often and fervently prayed. "Well, H——," I said, "how are you this morning?" "Quite well, thank you, sir." "Where have you been?" "For a walk, as far as the——." "I did not see you at chapel this morning." "No, sir, I was *too late*." "Too late, H——! If you read the xxv. of Matthew, you read of five who were too late, for '*the door was shut*,'—if that should be your case." I left him, praying the Lord to make it a word in season; but I could not get rid of his reply. Again and again it seemed to sound in my ears, "I was **TOO LATE**, sir." I could not but think of how many, on the Lord's-day morning are *too late* for the public service, and therefore come not to the worship of God. But why is *this*? Is it not a want of interest in the *service*? And does not this show a want

of love to the Lord? If we are not interested in the worship of God now, how can we expect to feel an interest in it when we die? If we have no love to the house of God on earth, can we have any reason to hope that we should feel at home, or enjoy the service of God, in his house in heaven? Surely not. Again, how many are *too late* to join in the devotional parts of the service! The minister enters the pulpit,—he rises to commence the service by prayer,—he sees in every direction vacant seats, and seats which will be all filled when he is preaching the sermon—this dejects and dispirits him, and it tells a sad tale of his people. A minister of Christ, whose chapel is generally *crowded* during sermon, complained a few Lord's-days ago, that when he rose to commence the service, there were but about thirty persons present: this is sad, very sad. The writer went a short time ago to preach for a brother minister, and asking the deacon as to the attendance, he said, "We are pretty well attended, but our people come so very late; and our pastor is that kind-hearted sort of man that he does not like to say anything about it publicly, for fear of hurting their feelings." *As the writer recommended the people that*

evening to read "THE CHURCH," perhaps they will take in good part the hint thus given, and correct this evil practice. Every member of the church should, if possible, be present at the commencement of the service, and thus set an example to those that are without. Many who do come early are disturbed during the devotional parts of the service by those who come late walking down the aisles, or passing by them to their places in the seats, stumbling over hassocks, knocking down books, &c. Dear Christian brethren, let me beseech you to remedy this evil; come, if possible, a few minutes before the service commences, and make it a point of conscience never to be TOO LATE, if thought, prudence, or early rising can prevent it.

"I WAS TOO LATE." This may prove true in a sense more solemn yet. Some will call upon God when it is *too late*. Hence we read, "As *He* cried, and *they* would not hear; so *they* cried, and *I* would not hear, saith the Lord of Hosts" (Zech. vii. 13). Again, "Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me" (Prov. i. 28). *Once more*, "Afterward came also the other *virgins*, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us.

But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not" (Matt. xxv. 11, 12). Therefore "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for *many*, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able: when once the Master of the house is risen up, and hath *shut to the door*, and ye begin to stand without and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are" (Luke xiii. 24, 25). "I was TOO LATE." Awful confession this. *Too late* in seeking mercy. *Too late* looking unto Jesus. But what made you *too late*? Were you not *invited early*? Were you not *warned solemnly*? Were you not *exhorted affectionately*? Yes; but I was TOO LATE. What made you too late? Ah! you loved pleasure,—you enjoyed sin,—you listened to Satan,—you followed the multitude,—you chose death rather than life.

Reader, how is it with you? Do you attend the means of grace *regularly*? Do you take your place in the Lord's house *early*? Do you listen to God's word *attentively*? Do you join in the prayers offered *heartily*? Do you seek salvation *diligently*? Is the welfare of the soul to you the one *thing needful*? If not, let me beseech you

to beware; do not procrastinate; do not delay—if you do, it may be “*too late*.” The *fever* may seize you. An *accident* may in one moment kill you. Death may give you no warning, but may hurry you unprepared into eternity, and you may have an eternity to repent of your folly, and in black despair exclaim, “I WAS TOO LATE.” You may be too late for heaven; but if so, the only alternative is hell. Young people, *to you* is the word of God’s salvation sent. For *you* the ministers of Christ most earnestly pray. *With you* we most affectionately plead. *Before you* the crown of glory is suspended. *On you* the hopes of the church are placed. *By you* the cause of God may be promoted. *Of you* the Saviour so loving speaks—“I love them that love me, and they that seek me early *shall find me*.” Others *may*, the young most certainly *shall*. “Seek, seek, seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near.” It is not *too late* to-day, but it may be to-morrow: therefore seize the present moment; ask *now*, and ye shall receive; seek *now*, and ye shall *find*; knock *now*, and the door of mercy *shall be opened* unto you.



THE DESIGN OF THE GOSPEL.

THE gospel is good news from God. It is glad tidings for lost sinners. It comes to us direct from God, and has, therefore, a solemn claim upon us. To trifle with the gospel, is impiety; to disbelieve it, is infidelity; to reject it without a careful examination, is the extreme of folly. No book has existed so long as part of the bible, no book has wrought such wonders as the bible, and in the bible we find the gospel. It is the history of God's love, the revelation of God's mercy, and points out the only way of escape from God's wrath. But what is its design?

1. To give us a correct view of God's character. It sets before us his holiness, his justice, his veracity, his faithfulness, his grace, his mercy, and his love: and it shows us how all these perfections harmonize in the salvation of a sinner, through the glorious work of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is holy, and cannot sanction or connive at sin. He is just, and will punish sin. He is true, and will make good his threaten-

ings against sin. He is faithful, and will fulfil his word to all who believe and act upon it. He is gracious, and delights to give the greatest blessings freely. He is merciful, and pities sinners, and is disposed to pardon them. He is love, and will display that love even to his bitterest enemies, if they apply at his gracious throne. But how can all these attributes harmonize in the salvation of a vile, base, and rebellious sinner? Thus. The sinner is convinced of his state, aware of God's character, and becomes alarmed at his danger. He reads the gospel, he perceives that there is salvation for sinners, he believes it, he applies to be saved in God's way, he is earnest at God's throne, and diligent in the use of the means of grace. God saves him, and saves him fully, freely, and eternally. All *his* sins have been imputed to Jesus, or placed to his account; justice has received full satisfaction for them, by his sufferings and death; the threatening has been executed upon the Substitute, and God is just while he justifies the sinner for the sake of Jesus. Grace found the Substitute, *justice* agreed to the transfer of the sinner's *guilt* to Him, mercy reveals the Saviour, *and love* invites the sinner to come and be

saved freely and for ever. The sinner hears, believes, comes to God by Jesus, and is pardoned. God is thus faithful to his word, and just to the sacrifice of his Son, in forgiving the sins of the man who heartily confesses them at his throne. Thus the gospel reveals God's true character. But the design of the gospel is,—

2. To bring back the sinner's heart to God. We are by nature all estranged from God, careless about God, and at enmity with God. If we think of him, we conclude that he is very much like ourselves, and go on with very little concern whether we please or displease him. If he is in our thoughts, he is not in our hearts. If we perform any religious services, we draw nigh to him with our mouths, and honour him with our lips, while our hearts are far from him. Nature suggests some fine thoughts of God, but it cannot win back the heart to God. The law reveals some of the glorious attributes of God, but it never brings back the heart of the sinner to love and obey God. It is the design of the gospel to do this. The good news informs us that God thought of us, pitied us, provided a way of salvation for us, and opened up a plain path to heaven for us,

without solicitation or desire on our part. That He delights to show mercy to such sinners as we are. That He rejoices to glorify his grace in the salvation of every one that is willing to be saved by the sacrifice of his Son. That He is pure, unmixed, tender love, to all who believe in Jesus. Is not this calculated to bring back the heart to Him? He might justly cast us all down to hell, but he will not. He might rejoice in our destruction as his enemies, and yet be holy. He might crush us by his terrible power, and leave us no possibility of escaping. But he assures us that he has no delight in punishing us; he kindly invites us to come to him just as we are, and he promises most positively to bestow everlasting life, honour, and happiness, upon us. Is not this enough to melt a sinner's heart, to change a sinner's thoughts of God, and bring every one that believes it as a suppliant at his feet? Ought it not to be? Verily it ought; but so dreadfully hardened are we through the deceitfulness of sin, that without the power of the Holy Spirit it never does so. Still the tendency and design of the gospel are *the same*.

✓ *Reader*, has the design of the gospel

been answered in you? Do you know God? Have you correct and heart-affecting views of his glorious character? Has your heart been brought back again to God? Is he now the object of your love and trust? Do you love to think of him, to worship him, and to obey him? Do you exercise confidence in his word, in his love, and in the sacrifice of his Son Jesus Christ? If so, you have peace with God, you are devoted to God, and you enjoy at times the gracious presence of God. But if the gospel has no enlightening, softening, sanctifying effect upon you, you are perhaps in the condition of some of whom the apostle wrote; read his solemn words and tremble, for, indeed, you have cause: "If our gospel be hid, *it is hid to them that are lost*: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." (2 Cor. iv. 3, 4.)

"The gospel brings a sov'reign balm
To ev'ry wounded soul;
Restores the dying man to life,
And makes the sinner whole."

The Design of the Gospel.

without solicitation or desire on our part. That He delights to show mercy to sinners as we are. That He rejoices to glorify his grace in the salvation of every one that is willing to be saved by the sacrifice of his Son. That He is pure, unmingled, tender love, to all who believe in Jesus. Is not this calculated to bring back the heart to Him? He might justly cast us all down to hell, but he will not. He might rejoice in our destruction as his enemies, and yet be holy. He might crush us by his terrible power, and leave us no possibility of escaping. But he assures us that he has no delight in punishing us; he kindly invites us to come to him just as we are, and he promises most positively to bestow everlasting life, honour, and happiness, upon us. Is not this enough to melt a sinner's heart, to change a sinner's thoughts of God, and bring every one that believes it as a suppliant at his feet? Ought it not to be? Vainly it might be said, that



A WORD FOR SERVANTS.

MANY persons professing religion, who find it necessary to employ servants, both in doors and out, think that if they provide for their temporal wants, and regularly pay them their wages, they have discharged their duty. Nothing can be more unscriptural. As we should seek the present and everlasting welfare of all about us, so especially of those who are employed by us, and minister to our comfort. Nor will any believer in Jesus discharge his duty to his domestics and dependents, unless he feels that a deep responsibility rests upon him, *to seek the immediate salvation of all within the reach of his influence.* Every master and mistress of a family, should feel under a solemn obligation to endeavour to bring every one in their employ to Jesus, and to deepen the spirituality of those who have already believed through grace. But many are exceedingly negligent here. There are deacons of churches who *never* pray in their *nor* even ask a blessing on their employ both male and female

servants, but who never speak to them about their souls. And it is to be feared that there are many members of churches in just the same state. How can we expect our churches to flourish? How can we expect servants to have correct ideas of religion? How can we expect our houses to be nurseries for the church, while such a state of things exists? Preachers may preach, pastors may complain, but until we have more real religion in our members, there will not be much done.

Reader, do you keep a servant? Or do you employ labourers or assistants? If so, do you realise the value of their immortal souls? Do you feel laid under a solemn obligation to seek their salvation? Does the love of Christ constrain you to travail in birth for their souls? Or can you see them careless about their souls, neglecting the bible, and going direct to hell, without any deep feeling or concern? If you can, where is the evidence of your own interest in Christ, or union to Christ? If you were really one with Christ, would you not sympathise with Christ? But can you sympathise with him who wept over *Jerusalem*, and died for the vilest transgressors, *if you have no pity, or deep concern for the*

salvation of those about you? It is quite time that some church officers resigned their offices,—that some church members gave up their profession of religion, or changed their conduct in this particular. Their servants perish, they are guilty of moral suicide, and they are accessory to the crime. They live prayerless, but they never warn them. They neglect to read the bible, and they never read it to them. They go not to hear the gospel, and they make no hearty effort to get them to do so. Do not, my friends, turn away from the subject and say, with some of old, "You want to bring these men's blood upon us;" it is perhaps on you already. The blood of souls is invisible, but it stains deep, it cries loud, it demands justice; and nothing but a direct application of the blood of Christ can remove it; but if that blood is really applied to you for your pardon, it will secure your reformation. Masters and mistresses in Israel, help! Your servants, your assistants, are perishing; shall they perish without any regarding it? They are going down quick into hell; shall they sink into endless despair from your employment, exclaiming, "No one cared for my soul?" Will you consent to their damna-

tion, without an effort to save them? If seized with cholera, or fever, or any other disease, would you show them no pity? Could you allow them to die without attempting to save them? You know you could not. But will you let them die the second death without pity, or without any direct or energetic effort for their deliverance?

Oh, pity, pity your servants' souls! Speak a word to them occasionally about sin and its consequences; about God and his claims; about Jesus and his perfect work; about salvation and the way to obtain it. Watch for a suitable opportunity, and get them to sit by you alone, while you warn them of their danger; invite them to Jesus, and tell them of the nature, importance, and happiness of real religion. Give them the religious tract, or the attractive little volume, which sets the way of salvation clearly before them; ask them to read it, and inquire if they have done so, and if they understand it. If they cannot read, read it to them; or read to them portions of God's word, and, as you are able, show them the meaning of what you read; for *many clever servants are grossly ignorant on religious subjects.* Pray for them by

name in private, and sometimes take them aside and pray with them. Always have them in to family prayer, and let them learn from your prayers, that you feel an interest in them, and have a zealous concern for their everlasting happiness. Show them that you are anxious to do them good; that you think that the religion that is good for you is good for them; that the ministry that profits you may profit them. Give them opportunities to hear the word every Lord's-day, and, if possible, at least occasionally in the week. Bad servants are often made so by those who employ them; and irreligious servants are confirmed in their irreligion by the conduct of those who employ them. The conversation of the parlour is often carried into the kitchen, and undoes all that the preacher has done in the house of God. Our influence for good or evil is immense. Oh, that we did but realise it as we should! Let every one look on each one whom he employs and ask, "Can I do anything for the soul of that man, that woman? Shall that girl, that lad, perish without my using any wise, well-directed effort to prevent it? Have *I been*, shall I be, accessory to the everlasting perdition of any of my household?"

Solemn questions these. Let them each sink down deep into our hearts, and influence our conduct and conversation. *Let every one of us watch for souls.* Let each one seek to be instrumental in the conversion of those about him; and "let him know that he which converteth a sinner from the error of his way, *SHALL save a soul from death*, and hide a multitude of sins." Masters, mistresses, arise! Realise your responsibility. Pity your servants. Seek their conversion to God. Strive for the salvation of their souls. Be determined, that if every one in your employment perish, the soul shall enter hell in despite of your prayers, efforts, example, and sympathies. "Deliver us from blood guiltiness, O God, thou God of our salvation."

"I want a principle within,
Of godly, jealous fear;
A sensibility of sin,
A pain to feel it near!

That I from thee no more may part,
No more thy goodness grieve;
The filial awe, the contrite heart,
The tender conscience give.

Quick as the apple of an eye,
O God, my conscience make.
Awake my soul when sin is nigh,
And keep it still awake."



A WORD TO SERVANTS.

WE always consider good servants very honourable characters. They are a comfort to the family in which they live, and a blessing to all by whom they are surrounded. But none can be really good servants but such as make the precepts of God's word their rule. Every good servant will often read over the directions of holy scriptures, and earnestly pray for grace to reduce them to practice. A good servant will obey his employers for the Lord's sake; he will perceive that God has appointed him to be a servant, and he can glorify God best, at present, in that character. To professing servants we now write. It is their welfare we especially seek. The character of God's cause is to a certain extent in their hands. Their employers will judge of religion by the tempers they manifest, the course they pursue, and the virtues or vices which they display. *It is not what you say, but what you do, that will impress and affect your employers.*

Your life should preach the gospel to them. They ought to *see* that religion makes you more patient, industrious, submissive, obliging, and cheerful than other servants. That you have another spirit in you. That you walk by another rule. That you act as under the eye of God. That you have that precept continually before you, "Servants, be obedient unto them which are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, *in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ* ; with good will doing service, *as to the Lord*, and not to men : *knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord*, whether he be bond or free" (Ephes. vi. 5-8).

But the subject to which we wish especially to call your attention, is *your duty to your unconverted fellow-servants*. Most servants have unconverted fellow-servants associated with them ; over these they *must* exercise an influence, either good or bad. They are daily making *some* impression upon them, but the question is, *Is it the right impression?* You ought to set your heart upon bringing your fellow-servants to God. Their speedy conversion to God *should be kept constantly before your eye.*

With a view to this you should avoid whatever would needlessly offend them, and endeavour by all lawful means to win their affections. Kind words and little attentions will often do this. If you are willing to oblige them, as far and as frequently as you can, without sin, you will soon win their hearts; for kindness is almost omnipotent. Do not be always talking to them about religion, but watch for opportunities. Walk religiously always, but only talk of religion occasionally. Make them *feel* that you wish to do them good. Speak a word for God whenever you have a good opportunity. Speak kindly as a friend, not as if you felt yourself superior. Invite them to accompany you to the house of God, when you can get out together. Offer them the use of your *seat* and *books* when you cannot go with them. Say what you can to commend your minister to them, and to awaken in them a desire to hear him. Talk after the services of the sermons you have heard, repeat short striking passages. Tell them of any interesting anecdotes you hear. Let them see that religion with you is not a form, but a living *reality*; that it makes you happy, and *that* you wish them to be as happy

as yourself. Every now and then give, or lay in their way, some suitable religious tract or little book. Offer to *lend* them "THE CHURCH," and *give* them "THE APPEAL." Be determined to leave no stone unturned, or neglect the use of any means, until you see them decided believers on the Son of God. Say, both by your words and deeds, "If you perish in your sins, it shall not be through any neglect of mine. If you will go to hell, I will not be accessary to your destruction." Set apart special times to pray for them, and pray for their immediate conversion. Pray for them by name. Pray as if you were really in earnest for their salvation, as if your heart's desire and prayer to God was, that they might be saved. Pray for them when you sit by them in the house of God. Pray for them when you know that they are gone out Sabbath-breaking, and are running into temptation. Never despair of doing them good. Never give way to the thought that God will not use such a poor instrument as you are. God does use just such, and will most probably use you, if you really wish him to do so.

I knew a young woman, of no particular talent, who though not exactly a servant

at the time, *had been*; and who, at the time referred to, gained her living by needle-work. She went to hear a sermon one week-day evening, the preacher took for his text, Psalm xxx. 5, and the sermon was an experimental one: the impression made upon her heart was, "If that is real religion, I am a stranger to it." By that sermon the Holy Spirit converted her soul. When she began to enjoy religion herself, she became intensely interested in, and concerned for, the salvation of her old acquaintances. She was living with a widow, who attended the village church, was a stranger to godliness, and deeply prejudiced against Dissenters. She endeavoured to induce her to accompany her to the chapel, but in vain: at length one Lord's day evening, she continued pleading with her so long, that at last she prevailed; but having two miles to go, they were so late that the sermon was begun. What the widow heard she very much disliked, and made up her mind that nothing should induce her to leave her "dear church" in future. However, kind importunity prevailed again; she came in time to hear the prayer; her eyes and her heart were opened; while the minister was praying, the thought rushed

into her mind, "Why, that is spiritual prayer." She listened to the sermon, went home, and became a new creature in Christ Jesus. She had three daughters and one son; in process of time they were all brought to God. She had a sister with four daughters and a son; and they were all led to the Saviour. A number of others from the same village were turned from darkness to light, and a considerable number regularly attended all the means of grace, of whom we cannot speak decidedly. Here, then, was *one* young woman, of no extraordinary attainments, in humble circumstances, brought to the knowledge of the truth. Her heart glows with love to Christ. She travails in birth for souls. She labours to bring others under the means, and the result is two whole families are made happy in the Lord, others are consecrated to God, and who shall say where it will end!

Other cases might be mentioned, but I introduce this because I knew all the parties, many of whom are now living, and can attest its truth. Servants, *set your heart* upon the conversion of souls, especially the souls of those who live and labour with you. Let *nothing* satisfy you but bringing souls to

Christ. Live for this. Labour for this. Pray for this. It cannot be in vain; you will reap a rich reward in your own soul, even if you do not witness the success you wish. Our members, who are servants, should be our *home missionaries*, they should carry the gospel where we cannot go. They should fill the pews, which we cannot do. Beloved friends, we beseech you to help us in the Lord. Live the gospel in your situations; show the power, purity, and happiness of religion to all around you; and oblige your unconverted fellow-servants to confess that religion must be a reality. As I heard a person say the other day, referring to the conversion and consistent life of a near relative, "I know that there is something in religion, by the change which it has made in him."

If an unconverted servant should read this, I would say to such a one, Be not prejudiced against religion by any inconsistencies which you see in some who profess it. There always have been mere professors; we are not prejudiced against a good sovereign because there are counterfeits; but we try to distinguish between *them*. Do you do so. We tell you that *there is such a thing as spiritual religion,*

and that it is a source of peace, joy, and satisfaction; all we ask of you is, to *try and see* if what we say is true or false. Take God's invitation, go to his throne, ask for his grace, seek his blessing, exercise confidence in Jesus, persevere in your application, and as sure as you read these words, as sure as there is anything like truth in the world, you shall find acceptance with God, obtain the pardon of your sins, be happy in the present world, and glorious in the world to come. May the Lord bless every servant who reads these lines, and make every one what every Christian should be. Amen.

“Jesus, thou dost not sue in vain,
O take what I can never give:
Thyself must give the power to man
His proffered Saviour to receive,
While knocking at the door thou art,
And pleading with his stubborn heart.

Come in, thou suppliant divine—
I hear thy voice and open now:
Take my poor heart, no longer mine,
Enter with all thy fulness thou:
Take my poor heart ('tis all thine own),
And never leave this humble throne.”



REAL RELIGION.

SOME persons pretend to religion, who know that they have not any. Others fancy they have it, but they are deceived. The great mass of the people do not know what real religion is. Ask the first person you meet, "What is real religion?" Ten to one if he can tell you; yea, you may often ask many, and they would not know. Some fancy it is going to a place of worship, believing certain doctrines, going through a round of forms, and performing a number of religious duties. But there may be all this, and yet no real religion. Others think if there are certain impressions made on the mind, and a reformation takes place in the life, there is religion. But there may be this, and no true godliness. What, then, is real religion? In what does it consist?

First, there must be *right views of God*. We must take into our minds the representation he has given of himself in his word. *God is a spirit. God is love. God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. God*

is an infinite being, and he is infinitely holy, just, true, faithful, good, and merciful. He has clothed himself with our nature, acted in our world, and spoken in our language, to make himself known to our fallen race. We must, therefore, look at the Lord Jesus, as God manifested in the flesh. As giving us an exact, perfect, and complete representation of God. God was in Christ. Christ was God over all, and blessed for evermore. Men in general have partial, imperfect, and unscriptural views of God; and while this is the case they cannot be really religious: for "this is life eternal, to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."

Secondly, the heart must be in *a right state toward God*. By nature we are alienated from God. We are at enmity against God. We reject the word and government of God. While this is the case, there can be no real religion. There is no confidence in God,—no love to God,—no zeal for God,—no desire to please God,—no fear of offending God. Real religion embraces reconciliation to God. Sorrow that we have offended God. Peace with God. Consecration to the service and honour of God. Walking in holy fellow-

ship and communion with God. We love to think of God. We love to hear of God. We love to speak with God. We love to praise God. He is the object of our faith, hope, desire, and affection. We cannot endure the thought of separation from him, or being banished from his presence. The sense and enjoyment of his presence would constitute a heaven anywhere. This is real religion.

Thirdly, it includes *obedience to God*. The obedience of the heart, and the obedience of the life. Obedience that flows from love, and is performed cheerfully. He that does not practically conform to God's will, makes it manifest that his heart is not in a right state toward God. We cannot know him as revealed in Jesus, and not love him; we cannot love him, and not yield hearty obedience to him. When obedience flows from love it is pleasant, it is hearty, it is thorough, it is constant. It is conformity to the whole revealed will of God, both in reference to moral precepts, and positive institutions. Such obedience is practical holiness, and proves that the sanctification of the Holy Spirit is realised *and enjoyed* in the soul.

Such is real religion. It is not light

without feeling, or feeling without obedience. But it is light, love, and holiness. Or right views of God, a right state of heart towards God, and the practical conformity of the life to the will of God. Reader, are you really religious? Knowledge without power will not do. Impressions without dedication to God are not enough. There must be the knowledge of God, love to God, and likeness to the moral image of God. We must know his name, love his perfections, and do his will, or we are not really religious. God must be seen in Christ, the enmity of the heart must be slain, thorough reconciliation to God must be effected, and the whole person be devoted unreservedly to his praise and glory. If this is the true state of the case (and what careful reader of the bible can doubt it?), then how very few, comparatively, are really religious. My reader, are you? How long have you been so? Of every mere talker, of every unholy walker, however orthodox his creed, or profound his knowledge of doctrine may be, it will be said by and bye, "*That man's religion is vain.*" It does not please God. It does not bring peace of conscience. It does not reflect God's image. It does not save its pos-

seignor from hell. God rejects it. Satan cares not for it. Man is not benefited by it. *It is vain.* The Lord preserve us from such a religion, and put us in possession of that which is divine, powerful, pure, and practical.

“Now I see, whate’er betide,
All is well, if Christ be mine ;
He has promis’d to provide,
I my all to him resign.

When a sense of sin and thrall
Forc’d me to the sinner’s Friend,
He engag’d to manage all,
By the way and to the end.

Cast, he said, on me thy care,
’Tis enough that I am nigh ;
I will all thy burdens bear,
I will all thy wants supply.

Simply follow as I lead,
Do not reason, but believe ;
Call on me in time of need,
Thou shalt surely help receive.

Lord, I would indeed submit,
Gladly yield my all to thee ;
What thy wisdom sees most fit
Must be, surely, best for me.”





THE FALLEN PROFESSOR.

"A deceived heart hath turned him aside."—

Isa. xlv. 20.

THIS is true of very many in the present day. They professed religion, for a time they did run well, we were full of hope respecting them, but they are turned aside. Self-examination is always important, but especially so before we make a public profession of Christ. Let a man examine himself thoroughly, and so let him put on Christ by baptism, and be joined to his people. Some are for delaying a profession of religion too long, and some rush into it too hastily. Few things are more difficult for a pastor, than to know whom to encourage to come forward, and whom to keep back. We have a character in our eye, let us look at him; "a deceived heart hath turned him aside."

This will apply to a professor, one who has numbered himself with God's people. He was sound in the truth. He embraced the doctrines of the gospel. He took the *precepts* for his guide. He professed to *rely on the promises*. The bible was his

essor from hell. God rejects it. Satan cares not for it. Man is not benefited by it. *It is vain.* The Lord preserve us from such a religion, and put us in possession of that which is divine, powerful, pure, and practical.

“Now I see, whate’er betide,
All is well, if Christ be mine ;
He has promis’d to provide,
I my all to him resign.

When a sense of sin and thrall
Forc’d me to the sinner’s Friend,
He engag’d to manage all,
By the way and to the end.

Cast, he said, on me thy care,
’Tis enough that I am nigh ;
I will all thy burdens bear,
I will all thy wants supply.

Simply follow as I lead,
Do not reason, but believe ;
Call on me in time of need,
Thou shalt surely help receive.

Lord, I would indeed submit,
Gladly yield my all to thee ;
What thy wisdom sees most fit
Must be, surely, best for me.”





THE FALLEN PROFESSOR.

"A deceived heart hath turned him aside."—

ISA. xlii. 20.

THIS is true of very many in the present day. They professed religion, for a time they did run well, we were full of hope respecting them, but they are turned aside. Self-examination is always important, but especially so before we make a public profession of Christ. Let a man examine himself thoroughly, and so let him put on Christ by baptism, and be joined to his people. Some are for delaying a profession of religion too long, and some rush into it too hastily. Few things are more difficult for a pastor, than to know whom to encourage to come forward, and whom to keep back. We have a character in our eye, let us look at him; "a deceived heart hath turned him aside."

This will apply to a professor, one who has numbered himself with God's people. He was sound in the truth. He embraced the doctrines of the gospel. He took the precepts for his guide. He professed to rely on the promises. The bible was his

essor from hell. God rejects it. Satan cares not for it. Man is not benefited by it. *It is vain.* The Lord preserve us from such a religion, and put us in possession of that which is divine, powerful, pure, and practical.

"Now I see, whate'er betide,
All is well, if Christ be mine;
He has promis'd to provide,
I my all to him resign.

When a sense of sin and thrall
Forc'd me to the sinner's Friend,
He engag'd to manage all,
By the way and to the end.

Cast, he said, on me thy care,
'Tis enough that I am nigh;
I will all thy burdens bear,
I will all thy wants supply.

Simply follow as I lead,
Do not reason, but believe;
Call on me in time of need,
Thou shalt surely help receive.

Lord, I would indeed submit,
Gladly yield my all to thee;
What thy wisdom sees most fit
Must be, surely, best for me."





THE FALLEN PROFESSOR.

"A deceived heart hath turned him aside."—

Isa. xlv. 20.

THIS is true of very many in the present day. They professed religion, for a time they did run well, we were full of hope respecting them, but they are turned aside. Self-examination is always important, but especially so before we make a public profession of Christ. Let a man examine himself thoroughly, and so let him put on Christ by baptism, and be joined to his people. Some are for delaying a profession of religion too long, and some rush into it too hastily. Few things are more difficult for a pastor, than to know whom to encourage to come forward, and whom to keep back. We have a character in our eye, let us look at him; "a deceived heart hath turned him aside."

This will apply to a professor, one who has numbered himself with God's people. He was sound in the truth. He embraced the doctrines of the gospel. He took the precepts for his guide. He professed to rely on the promises. The bible was his

essor from hell. God rejects it. Satan cares not for it. Man is not benefited by it. *It is vain.* The Lord preserve us from such a religion, and put us in possession of that which is divine, powerful, pure, and practical.

“ Now I see, whate’er betide,
All is well, if Christ be mine ;
He has promis’d to provide,
I my all to him resign.

When a sense of sin and thrall
Forc’d me to the sinner’s Friend,
He engag’d to manage all,
By the way and to the end.

Cast, he said, on me thy care,
’Tis enough that I am nigh ;
I will all thy burdens bear,
I will all thy wants supply.

Simply follow as I lead,
Do not reason, but believe ;
Call on me in time of need,
Thou shalt surely help receive.

Lord, I would indeed submit,
Gladly yield my all to thee ;
What thy wisdom sees most fit
Must be, surely, best for me.”





THE FALLEN PROFESSOR.

"A deceived heart hath turned him aside."—

ISA. xlii. 20.

THIS is true of very many in the present day. They professed religion, for a time they did run well, we were full of hope respecting them, but they are turned aside. Self-examination is always important, but especially so before we make a public profession of Christ. Let a man examine himself thoroughly, and so let him put on Christ by baptism, and be joined to his people. Some are for delaying a profession of religion too long, and some rush into it too hastily. Few things are more difficult for a pastor, than to know whom to encourage to come forward, and whom to keep back. We have a character in our eye, let us look at him; "a deceived heart hath turned him aside."

This will apply to a professor, one who has numbered himself with God's people. He was sound in the truth. He embraced the doctrines of the gospel. He took the precepts for his guide. He professed to rely on the promises. The bible was his

sector from hell. God rejects it. Satan cares not for it. Man is not benefited by it. *It is vain.* The Lord preserve us from such a religion, and put us in possession of that which is divine, powerful, pure, and practical.

“Now I see, whate’er betide,
All is well, if Christ be mine ;
He has promis’d to provide,
I my all to him resign.

When a sense of sin and thrall
Fore’d me to the sinner’s Friend,
He engag’d to manage all,
By the way and to the end.

Cast, he said, on me thy care,
’Tis enough that I am nigh ;
I will all thy burdens bear,
I will all thy wants supply.

Simply follow as I lead,
Do not reason, but believe ;
Call on me in time of need,
Thou shalt surely help receive.

Lord, I would indeed submit,
Gladly yield my all to thee ;
What thy wisdom sees most fit
Must be, surely, best for me.”





THE FALLEN PROFESSOR.

"A deceived heart hath turned him aside."—

ISA. xlv. 20.

THIS is true of very many in the present day. They professed religion, for a time they did run well, we were full of hope respecting them, but they are turned aside. Self-examination is always important, but especially so before we make a public profession of Christ. Let a man examine himself thoroughly, and so let him put on Christ by baptism, and be joined to his people. Some are for delaying a profession of religion too long, and some rush into it too hastily. Few things are more difficult for a pastor, than to know whom to encourage to come forward, and whom to keep back. We have a character in our eye, let us look at him; "a deceived heart hath turned him aside."

This will apply to a professor, one who has numbered himself with God's people. He was sound in the truth. He embraced the doctrines of the gospel. He took the precepts for his guide. He professed to rely on the promises. The bible was his

essor from hell. God rejects it. Satan cares not for it. Man is not benefited by it. *It is vain.* The Lord preserve us from such a religion, and put us in possession of that which is divine, powerful, pure, and practical.

"Now I see, whate'er betide,
All is well, if Christ be mine ;
He has promis'd to provide,
I my all to him resign.

When a sense of sin and thrall
Forc'd me to the sinner's Friend,
He engag'd to manage all,
By the way and to the end.

Cast, he said, on me thy care,
'Tis enough that I am nigh ;
I will all thy burdens bear,
I will all thy wants supply.

Simply follow as I lead,
Do not reason, but believe ;
Call on me in time of need,
Thou shalt surely help receive.

Lord, I would indeed submit,
Gladly yield my all to thee ;
What thy wisdom sees most fit
Must be, surely, best for me."





THE FALLEN PROFESSOR.

"A deceived heart hath turned him aside."—

Isa. xlii. 20.

THIS is true of very many in the present day. They professed religion, for a time they did run well, we were full of hope respecting them, but they are turned aside. Self-examination is always important, but especially so before we make a public profession of Christ. Let a man examine himself thoroughly, and so let him put on Christ by baptism, and be joined to his people. Some are for delaying a profession of religion too long, and some rush into it too hastily. Few things are more difficult for a pastor, than to know whom to encourage to come forward, and whom to keep back. We have a character in our eye, let us look at him; "a deceived heart hath turned him aside."

This will apply to a professor, one who has numbered himself with God's people. He was sound in the truth. He embraced the doctrines of the gospel. He took the precepts for his guide. He professed to rely on the promises. The bible was his

essor from hell. God rejects it. Satan cares not for it. Man is not benefited by it. *It is vain.* The Lord preserve us from such a religion, and put us in possession of that which is divine, powerful, pure, and practical.

“Now I see, whate’er betide,
All is well, if Christ be mine ;
He has promis’d to provide,
I my all to him resign.

When a sense of sin and thrall
Forc’d me to the sinner’s Friend,
He engag’d to manage all,
By the way and to the end.

Cast, he said, on me thy care,
’Tis enough that I am nigh ;
I will all thy burdens bear,
I will all thy wants supply.

Simply follow as I lead,
Do not reason, but believe ;
Call on me in time of need,
Thou shalt surely help receive.

Lord, I would indeed submit,
Gladly yield my all to thee ;
What thy wisdom sees most fit
Must be, surely, best for me.”





THE FALLEN PROFESSOR.

"A deceived heart hath turned him aside."—

ISA. XLIV. 20.

THIS is true of very many in the present day. They professed religion, for a time they did run well, we were full of hope respecting them, but they are turned aside. Self-examination is always important, but especially so before we make a public profession of Christ. Let a man examine himself thoroughly, and so let him put on Christ by baptism, and be joined to his people. Some are for delaying a profession of religion too long, and some rush into it too hastily. Few things are more difficult for a pastor, than to know whom to encourage to come forward, and whom to keep back. We have a character in our eye, let us look at him; "a deceived heart hath turned him aside."

This will apply to a professor, one who has numbered himself with God's people. He was sound in the truth. He embraced the doctrines of the gospel. He took the *precepts* for his guide. He professed to *rely on the promises*. The bible was his

sector from hell. God rejects it. & cares not for it. Man is not benefite it. *It is vain.* The Lord preserve us such a religion, and put us in possessi that which is divine, powerful, pure, practical.

“Now I see, whate’er betide,
All is well, if Christ be mine ;
He has promis’d to provide,
I my all to him resign.

When a sense of sin and thrall
Forc’d me to the sinner’s Friend,
He engag’d to manage all,
By the way and to the end.

Cast, he said, on me thy care,
’Tis enough that I am nigh ;
I will all thy burdens bear,
I will all thy wants supply.

Simply follow as I lead,
Do not reason, but believe ;
Call on me in time of need,
Thou shalt surely help receive.

Lord, I would indeed submit,
Gladly yield my all to thee ;
What thy wisdom sees most fit
Must be, surely, best for me.”





THE FALLEN PROFESSOR.

"A deceived heart hath turned him aside."—

ISA. XLV. 20.

THIS is true of very many in the present day. They professed religion, for a time they did run well, we were full of hope respecting them, but they are turned aside. Self-examination is always important, but especially so before we make a public profession of Christ. Let a man examine himself thoroughly, and so let him put on Christ by baptism, and be joined to his people. Some are for delaying a profession of religion too long, and some rush into it too hastily. Few things are more difficult for a pastor, than to know whom to encourage to come forward, and whom to keep back. We have a character in our eye, let us look at him; "a deceived heart hath turned him aside."

This will apply to a professor, one who has numbered himself with God's people. He was sound in the truth. He embraced the doctrines of the gospel. He took the precepts for his guide. He professed to rely on the promises. The bible was his

book, and a sound gospel ministry his light. He was regular in his attendance upon the means of grace. He came only to the sermons, but to the prayer meetings. His attention, and application, devotion, were pleasing and encouraging. His fixed eye, and serious behaviour inspired us with confidence. There was nothing light, or restless, or indecorous in his behaviour as becometh godliness. He was useful in his station in life. He spoke for Christ to his fellows, he taught in the Sunday school, he wrote religious letters, he distributed gospel tracts, he appeared desirous of benefiting around him. He was his pastor's help, the church's joy, and a lesson to the world. We wished there were many like him, his talents were respectable, his education was good, his manners were pleasing, everything seemed to indicate that he would be a useful character. But a change has taken place. A blight has settled upon the flower. A cloud has obscured the prospect. The pastor's heart is grieved. The weak of the flock are stumbled. The church mourns. The enemy triumphs. *What is done?* He is turned aside. *has turned from God.* The closet is

saken. He prays no more. The truth is given up, and lax, if not infidel, principles are embraced, propagated, and defended. Duty is disregarded; he feels like Pharoah, if he does not speak like him, when he said, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey him?" The church is despised and forsaken. The prayer-meeting was first neglected, then he only attended the public services once on the Lord's-day. Then he only came occasionally. At last he gave up altogether. He was warned, but he despised the warning. He was exhorted, but he rejected the exhortation. The world flattered him, pride took possession of him, and Satan gained the complete mastery over him. He withdrew from his old associates, and from the field of labour; as he did not enjoy religion, he could not, he would not, labour to bring others to seek it. The bible was left unopened, the voice of conscience was stifled, the company of the godly was shunned, and he turned aside to folly. What he once despised, he now values. The company he once avoided, he now seeks. Vanity is his characteristic, and vanity will be his recompense. He is turned aside after Satan, who now rules in *his heart*, leads captive his affections, be-

wilders his judgment, stupifies his conscience, and powerfully works upon his imagination. Men, worldly men, gather him into their company. He is courted, flattered, and captivated; completely led away by the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. He cannot bear reflection, he avoids being much alone, he has become the friend of the world, and is completely turned aside.

But what did it? A deceived and a deceitful heart hath turned him aside. Error was presented in a fascinating dress. Pride of intellect was fostered. Satan laid his snares, adapted his temptations to his age, temperament, disposition, and circumstances: he took the bait, and was caught by the hook. His natural lusts were pampered, and the reins were thrown upon their neck. He became giddy, bewildered, and was deceived. But how was he brought to this state? He walked on the very margin of Christian liberty, instead of getting and keeping as near to the Saviour as he could. He yielded to temptation, first secretly, and in reference to little things, which paved the way for greater; for if *Satan can get us to yield to a small temptation to-day, he will try us with a greater*

to-morrow. He tampered with sin, lowering the standard, making allowance for the weakness of nature, the force of circumstances, and the custom of the times. He listened to false teachers, whose business is always to lead us to think lightly of sin, meanly of the Saviour, highly of self, and unscripturally of God. He read improper books, such as feed vanity, excite lust, pamper pride, produce levity, lead from God, unfit for prayer, and secretly undermine religion. He became deluded, laughed at his former fears, ridiculed his conscientious scruples, questioned the truth of revelation, and affected to pity those fanatics who talk of experimental religion, degrade human nature, and incessantly dwell upon exploded doctrines, and old-fashioned practices. Thus the Holy Spirit was grieved and vexed, so that he was given up to his own heart's lusts, and he walked in his own counsels. Lively Christians were forsaken and treated with contempt. The cultivation or preservation of the heart was entirely neglected. The eye was left at liberty to rove and pry into improper objects and subjects. The ear became the entrance to *what was* polluting, misleading, and degrading; and the carnal desire to know

practically what the lowest degrees of sin can be is indulged, and so the text is fulfilled, "A deceived heart hath turned him aside."

Where is he now? In the path of danger, for "he walketh in the counsel of the ungodly, he standeth in the way of sinners, he sitteth in the seat of the scornful." *What* is he now? A deceived soul. "He feedeth on ashes. He cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?"

What does his conduct say to you? "Let us, therefore, fear; beware lest, being led away with the error of the wicked, ye fall from your own steadfastness." "See that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise men, redeeming the time, *because the days are evil.*" "Trust not in thine own heart, lean not unto thine own understanding; for he that trusteth in his own heart is a fool." "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation." "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall." Get close to God, and keep close to God. "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." Be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long. Keep at the greatest possible distance from temptation. If Satan can get *you to listen*, he may get you to look;

he get you to look, he may get you to desire; if he get you to desire, he will get you to yield. Cry to the strong for strength. Cultivate a sense of your own weakness. Live and walk in fellowship with Jesus. Often think of the words of the Holy Ghost, by Peter, of tempters and the results, "These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom *the mist of darkness is reserved for ever.* For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, *they allure through the lusts of the flesh,* through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error. While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage. For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. *For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.*" (2 Peter ii. 17-21.) Young men, beware. Curious, critical hearers, take

heed. Men of business, who are much in the company of the world, stand in awe. Your adversary, the devil, goeth about seeking whom he may devour. Let us all daily pray, "Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of thy wing. Create in me a clean heart, O God, renew a right spirit within me. Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe: and I will have respect unto thy statutes continually."

"And will ye go away
From Christ, as some of old?
Who walk'd no more, the Scriptures say,
With him and with his fold.

And will ye go away
From Christ, his house, his friends,
His table, his delightful day,
And bliss that nether ends?

And will ye go away?
And whither will you go?
Will you in sin and bondage stray
To everlasting woe?

Dear Lord, one bliss impart,
('Tis not for heaven we pray,)
But—let us not from thee depart,
No, NEVER go away."



QUESTIONS FOR CONSCIENCE.

FOR CONVICTION.

HAVE I been duly affected with the present low state of the church of Christ?

2. Have I made conscience of attending the means of grace regularly, especially the prayer-meetings and week-day sermon?

3. Have I used special prayer in private for my pastor, and the success of the gospel in these trying times?

4. Have I lately used any special efforts to bring sinners under the gospel, and to lead them to the Saviour?

5. Have I sought out and encouraged any that are under concern of soul, and need pointing to the Saviour?

6. Have I set my heart upon, and especially aimed at, the conversion of any particular individual?

7. Have I cautioned and admonished any that I saw to be declining from the Lord's ways?

8. Have I tried to reclaim and bring back any backslider to the fold?

9. Have I been the means of misleading any one, or producing a bad impression by anything indulged in my spirit or conduct?

10. Have I made any special effort to spread the truth and make the Saviour known?

11. Have I kept the conversion of sinners constantly in view, when writing letters, visiting friends, or walking abroad?

12. Have I consecrated any particular portion of my property to the Lord's cause?

13. Can I be happy if I am not useful, or believe, for one moment, that I am acting in character, if I do not daily live for the good of souls and to promote God's glory?

FOR REFORMATION.

1. Will you humbly confess your past indifference, seek for pardon at the throne of grace, entreat the Lord to give you deeper spirituality, and consecrate you entirely to himself?

2. Will you set your heart upon being useful, put yourself anew into the Lord's hands for the purpose, and look out for opportunities to do good to souls?

3. Will you endeavour to realize more

vividly the value of souls, the danger of an unconverted state, the uncertainty of life, and the awful doom of every sinner who dies in his sins?

4. Will you strive to bear in mind that you are the Lord's property, that your one object should be to please him, and that every talent you possess should be employed in his cause and for his glory?

5. Will you, at least once in the day, offer up special prayer for your pastor, that God would more thoroughly sanctify him, and greatly increase his usefulness?

6. Will you make conscience of retiring for a short time each day, to plead with God for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, upon the church and the world?

7. Will you, from this day, make a point of being more regular in your attendance upon the means of grace, and never be absent from the prayer-meeting, if you can possibly avoid it?

8. Will you consider it to be your duty, to invite every person to the house of God who does not regularly attend there, if you consistently can; and when any one attends whom you invite, to make the conversion of *that person's* soul the subject of special prayer?

9. Will you keep your eye upon young persons who are particularly exposed to temptation, and by prayer and counsel endeavour to preserve them from being overcome?

10. Will you read over the epistle to the Laodiceans (Rev. iii. 14-22), at least *once* every week, and pray earnestly against falling into a lukewarm state?

11. Will you write, at least, one letter a month, to some unconverted or undecided person, a relative or an acquaintance, endeavouring to bring the soul to the Saviour?

12. Will you introduce and recommend "THE APPEAL" to your Christian friends, and purchase as many copies as you can afford yourself monthly, and present them to unconverted persons, with special prayer for their conversion?

13. Will you read over these questions frequently, and consider them seriously as in the sight of God, praying the Holy Spirit to lay them on your conscience, and make them of real use to your soul?



THE CHURCHES' COMPLAINT.

"We see not our signs."—Ps. lxxiv. 9.

THIS was the complaint of the Lord's people of old, and it is the complaint of many now. We sow much, and reap little. We use many means, but we realise but little success. We are ready to ask, "Where is the Lord God of Elijah?" We see not our signs, or proofs, or tokens that our God is among us, that he is pleased with us, and that he is working by us. We want signs of—

1. *Life imparted to sinners dead in trespasses and sins.* To know that they discover their lost condition, feel the danger to which they are exposed, and sigh and groan for deliverance therefrom. To perceive that they are breathing the breath of life, or praying, like Saul of Tarsus, with the spirit and the understanding also. To discover that they are feeding upon the bread of heaven, and desiring the sincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby. To learn that they are active for God, exercising faith in his word, love to

his name, and zeal for his glory. We want signs of—

2. *Liveliness among the saints.* To see them *zealous* for their God; not lukewarm, not worldly, not half-hearted, but throwing all their energies into his cause. Living *for* God, and living *to* God. To find them *wrestling* with God as Jacob of old, resolved to obtain the blessing, if earnest, fervent prayer can bring it down. Flocking to prayer-meetings, and embracing every opportunity of pleading with God for his spirit and grace. To observe that they are all *active* for God, every one in his own proper and appropriate sphere: so that none are loiterers in the heavenly road, or idlers in the Lord's vineyard. To know that, like Israel of old; they are mourning after the Lord, and cannot be happy, will not be comforted, until He return unto his Jerusalem with mercies, and cause the wilderness to rejoice and blossom as the rose. Oh, that all the Lord's people were lively! That all were active, devoted, and bringing forth fruit unto God! We want signs of—

3. *A revival in the church.* Such as a deep and painful sense of the need of it. *We do not half feel our need of a revival as we ought.* We are too well satisfied

- with the present state of things. Some try to make the best of them, others talk about them, but are not grieved or pained at heart because the city is low in a low place. Few feel a glowing desire for what they admit is desirable. We are only half-hearted. We are not deeply affected. Our desires for a revival of religion, never keep us awake by night, stimulate us to rise early for prayer, or lead us to set apart special seasons for agonising with God until he pour us out the blessing. We are languid and comparatively lifeless. Oh, that God would thoroughly rouse us up, and give us such a burning desire for a change, that we may get no rest until we obtain it! Before a revival can be expected, there must be a rallying together to pray for it. Pastors, deacons, and members, must set their hearts upon it, and meet together, thoroughly in earnest to obtain it. We want to be impressed with a deep sense of the need of an *immediate revival* of religion in our souls, in our churches, in our congregations, in our families, and in the world at large. To feel a glowing desire to obtain it, and, as the result, to rally together by hundreds to seek for it. Mere talking is no use. *Writing* upon the subject is of little avail.

Preaching is not enough. We must *feel*, and *feel deeply*. We must be in *earnest*, and manifest our earnestness by pleading with God in our closets, in our families, and in the meetings for prayer. Our prayer-meetings must undergo a change; they must be less formal, less commonplace. Brethren must pray as if they meant every word they said. All present must unite. Every heart must be engaged. All must be energetic and aim at one object, even that God would pour out his quickening, converting, and sanctifying Spirit. We may complain, "We see not our signs;" and it is very likely that we shall complain, except we individually stir up ourselves to take hold upon God (Isaiah lxiv. 7). Our worldliness, our covetousness, our pride, our selfishness, our Laodicean self-satisfaction, and our boasting, have separated between us and our God; and such sins as these have hid his face from us, so that he will not hear. Oh, for deep conviction of sin! Oh, to see the church of Christ thoroughly broken down under a sense of sin! Oh, that God would convert us all afresh, and fill us with the Holy Ghost and with *power!*

"We see not our signs;" for few are

added to us, and those who are, are not the thorough-going, active, devoted, self-consecrating Christians which the times call for. Few are deciding for God in our congregations; the work, in the best, is slight; there is a want of depth, and spirituality, and experimental certainty about them. Few are inquiring the way to Zion with their faces thitherward. Few appear properly affected with the present state of things. We have spoken of them, but where is the result? We have written of them, but to what effect? Some are tired of the subject, and want smoother things; they say, "Prophesy smooth things." But how can we do so? The only wonder is, that we can take any rest, or even enjoy our many mercies, while the church is in such a state. Beloved, what is to be done? Shall we hold our peace? Shall we take our rest? Preachers are complaining,—pastors are unsettled,—church members are dissatisfied,—congregations, in many places, are decaying,—and where things are at the best, but little is doing. Let us humble ourselves before the Lord. Let us seize a few minutes every day to plead with God for a revival. Let us be determined to give *him no rest*, until the Spirit be poured upon

us from on high. "O God, arise, and let thine enemies be scattered," convert thy foes, fill thy friends with the Holy Ghost and with power, and revive thy **ONE CHURCH** universally! Popery is spreading, discontent is deepening among the people, the foundations of the earth seem to be out of course, and "we see not our signs." Surely perilous times are come. **Every-**thing around us—in nature, in providence, and in grace—calls for deep seriousness. Famine is threatened,—pestilence is abroad,—labour is scarce,—trade is dull,—winter is coming,—the poor are suffering,—Satan is working,—religion is low,—and the Lord's servants are crying, "Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed!" Brethren, let us *arise as one man*, and let us *prove* the truth of our Saviour's words, "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you." (John xvi. 23, 24.)

"Near to each other and to thee,
Lord, bring us all in unity;
O pour thy Spirit from on high,
And all our numerous wants supply."



A GOOD CHARACTER.

"Approved in Christ."—ROM. xvi. 10.

WE know not *who* Apelles was; but we are told *what* he was. He was a Christian, for he was "in Christ." He was a consistent Christian, for he was "approved in Christ." He was created "anew in Christ Jesus unto good works," and was a living proof of the apostle's statement, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." His character was good, his state was enviable, his commendation was honourable. Oh, to be in Christ! This is our highest honour. Oh, to be approved in Christ! This is true dignity. Let us think of it. Let us aim at it. Let us pray over it. Let us strive for it. We may be in Christ, and so be eternally safe. We may be approved in Christ, and so be "found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ." Let us briefly consider,—

First, THE PRIVILEGE. "In Christ."

This flows from the free, sovereign, and distinguishing grace of God. It is of pure grace, and of grace alone, that God put us "among the children," and puts us in his beloved Son. He chose us to this privilege before time began. He appointed us to this blessedness in the ancient covenant. He called us to this grace in the fulness of time. To be "in Christ" is to be *quickened by his Spirit*. We are all naturally dead in sin. We have no spiritual life. We walk according to the course of this world, and are the "children of wrath, even as others." And in this state we remain, until "God, who is rich in mercy, for the great love wherewith he loved us, quickens us together with Christ," and saves us by his grace. Life from Christ is communicated instantaneously; the dead "hear the voice of the Son of God," and, hearing, they live. Then they feel their need of Christ, think about Christ, desire to possess Christ, seek an interest in Christ, and can find no rest until they come to Christ. To be "in Christ" is to be *justified by his obedience*. His perfect work is placed to our account, his glorious righteousness is imputed to our souls. We feel we need it. We perceive its exact

adaptation to us. We pant to possess it. We see that the gospel gives us a warrant to appropriate it. By faith we embrace it. God justifies us through it, accepts us in it, and we are entitled to glory by it. We now have peace with God. We now joy in God. Jesus is precious, unspeakably precious to our souls. We love him, but cannot love him as we desire. We adore him, but cannot exalt him as we wish. We speak of him, but are never satisfied with what we say, and thereof often exclaim,—

“ I would for ever speak His name,
In sounds to mortal ears unknown ;
With angels to join to praise the Lamb,
And worship at His Father’s throne.”

To be “in Christ” is to be *ruled by his word*. Custom must now give place to precept,—fashion and feeling to the law of Christ. For no man is justified by his work, who does not reverence and obey his word. The soul naturally asks, What does my Saviour wish me to do ? how would he have me walk ? what does he require of me ? And the precepts of the New Covenant answer these inquiries most fully. *There is no need of tradition. There is no necessity for the direction of the priest.*

For the man "in Christ" finds that the Holy Scriptures, which were given by inspiration of God, are "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness," and are sufficient in the hand of the Holy Spirit alone, to make the man of God perfect, thoroughly furnishing him for every good work (2 Tim. iii. 16, 17). To be "in Christ" is to be *united to his person*. As the branch is united to the vine, as the building is united to the foundation, as the bride is united to the bridegroom, so the believer is united to Christ. He derives his life, his light, his righteousness, his holiness, his happiness, his strength, his all, from Christ. He rests upon Christ, he is sustained by Christ, his safety is from Christ. Christ and the Christian are one. Glorious fact! Unspeakable mercy! Blessed privilege! "We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." Oh, for an angel's eloquence! oh, for a seraph's powers! to set forth, in suitable terms, the greatness, the glory, the blessedness of being one with Christ. If in Christ, we are safe. If in Christ, we are honourable. If in Christ, we shall be glorified *with him for ever*. But let us notice,—

Secondly, THE COMMENDATION. "*Approved in Christ.*" Approved by good men, by wise men, by holy men, and approved by God himself. To be "*approved in Christ,*" we must *breathe his spirit.* That is a spirit of love, meekness, self-denial, benevolence, and consecration to God. Jesus was the loving one; his love was perfect, constant, and wisely manifested. We also must love, in measure, as Jesus loved. He was meek and lowly of heart, and we must be meek and lowly too. The proud, the haughty, the unbending, the lordly, can never be "*approved in Christ.*" Jesus denied himself; he never consulted his own ease, pleasure, or earthly prosperity, but his Father's glory, and his people's present and everlasting good. The lovers of themselves,—those who feast on earthly pleasures, or those who, under spiritual duties, give way to promote outward prosperity, cannot be "*approved in Christ.*" Jesus breathed pure benevolence, and consecrated himself entirely to God; he "*went about doing good;*" his meat was to do the will of his Father, and to finish his work. The selfish, the covetous, the close-fisted, the *earthly-minded*, can never be "*approved in Christ.*" To be "*approved in Christ*"

is to copy his example,—to do as he did,—to walk as he walked,—to aim at what he aimed,—to study him as our model,—to look to him as our exemplar,—to imitate him in all his imitable excellencies. Such do not ask, “what will men think?” or “what will men say?” but, “what will Jesus think of this? how will this appear in his eyes? what will he say? will he commend, or will he condemn?” To be “approved in Christ” is to *aim at his honour*. This is the object of the man’s life;—this the end of every plan he draws, of every purpose he forms, of every course he pursues. He wishes to honour Jesus in his thoughts, in his creed, in his converse, in his conduct, in all that he does. Does he work? It is to honour Christ. Does he suffer? He aims to honour Christ. Does he give his property? It is to honour Christ. He is willing to lie low, that Jesus may be exalted. He is willing to debase the creature, that he may exalt the Saviour. His heart and his voice unite in saying,—

“Let Him be crowned with majesty,
Who bowed his head to death;
And be his honours sounded high,
By all things that have breath.”

To be “approved in Christ” is to endea-

your to bring others to him. No one can sympathise with Jesus who does not long, pray, and strive to save souls from death; and if we do not sympathise with Christ, can we be "approved by Christ," and by those who are like Christ? Impossible! Jesus entered into covenant before time, came into the world in time, lived, laboured, agonised, and died, to save souls. He sent forth his apostles, gave his Holy Spirit, and commanded his church to preach the gospel to every creature, in order to save souls. And if we do not long and labour to bring souls to Jesus, we have another and an opposite spirit in us; and if we have a spirit opposite to the spirit of Christ, can we be approved of Christ? Yea, can we be Christ's at all? Hear the apostle,—“If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.”

Beloved, are you in Christ? Have you been quickened by his Spirit? Are you clothed in his righteousness? Are you ruled by his word? Are you united to his person? There is no safety out of Christ. There is no true honour without union to Christ. You can have no title to heaven except you are one with Christ. *To be without Christ is to be under God's*

curse, exposed to eternal woe, and to be surrounded by all the elements of misery in the present world. Never rest short of union to Christ. Are you approved in Christ? Do you breathe his spirit? Do you copy his example? Do you habitually aim at his honour? Are you daily endeavouring to bring poor sinners to him? Search, examine closely, look narrowly into the matter, and let nothing satisfy you short of this. Make your calling and election *sure*. If you are in Christ, then live upon Christ, walk closely with Christ, work daily for Christ, strive to become exactly like Christ, aim in everything to honour Christ, and anticipate the day when you shall be introduced into the glorious presence of Christ, and so be for ever with him.

“Heavenly Adam, life divine,
Change my nature into Thine;
Move and spread throughout my soul,
Actuate and fill the whole;
Be it I no longer now,
Living in the flesh, but Thou.”





HOW SHALL I OBTAIN PEACE?

I HAVE sinned, and I fear God is angry. I feel guilty, and I dread the thought of appearing before him. I am anxious and disquieted, and can obtain no rest. I try to pray, but am no better. I read the bible, but it produces no change. I hear the gospel, but it does me no good. I know not what to do, which way to look, or how to get relief. *How shall I obtain peace?*

This is an interesting question; it lies at the root of all our happiness and all our holiness. Peace *may* be obtained. It may be obtained by any sinner who really desires it. It may be obtained at any time, and in any place. The Lord Jesus Christ was our Substitute. He took our nature, suffered in our stead, and died in our place. His sacrifice was a full and sufficient atonement for all our sins. God is well pleased with him in consequence of it. He has placed him at his own right hand in heaven. *He looks upon him with infinite satisfaction and delight.* He has placed him

before us in the everlasting gospel, and has bidden us look away from self, from sin, and from all our deserts, to him; and promises everlasting life to all and every one that looks to, and places confidence in, him and his perfect work. The way to obtain peace therefore is, to look simply, immediately, and alone to Jesus; to view him as bearing our sins, suffering our deserts, and doing everything necessary for the salvation of every one that confides in him.

If I want peace, I look to Jesus. I view him as my Substitute,—I see my sins laid upon him,—punished in him,—and put away by him. He is my peace. I will not look at anything, or to any one, but him. He is enough. There is infinitely more merit in his blood to save me, than there is in my sins to condemn me. I cast my soul upon him, I rely on him entirely, and I feel that it is utterly impossible to perish while I do so. His *whole work* is placed to the account of every one that believes on him; and every one that renounces self, confesses sin, and trusts simply in Jesus, stands before God acquitted, justified, and accepted, as really and as fully as if he had done all that Jesus did, and suffered all that Jesus suffered, in his own

proper person. With him justice is satisfied. For him the whole law has been fulfilled. To him the whole work of Christ is imputed. He is passed from death unto life, and shall never come into condemnation. This is the way to obtain peace.

But may any sinner obtain peace in this way? Yes, any sinner. Jesus says to every one to whom the gospel comes, "Come unto me," and pledges his word that every coming sinner shall be received; for he says, "Him that cometh I will in no wise cast out." Nothing can induce him to cast out a coming sinner. No matter how vile, how depraved, how sinful, how old, how hardened, how unworthy, the sinner is, if he comes he shall be received, and received cheerfully, readily, and with a smile. Every one that comes to Jesus by prayer and faith, is instantly pardoned, perfectly justified, honourably reconciled to God, and put in possession of a title to everlasting life. Now, if a sinner is pardoned, justified, reconciled to God, and possesses a title to eternal life, will not this give him peace? *I think so. I know it will*; for I have found peace in this way myself. There must be no reference to *works, to feelings, to purposes of amend-*

ment, to the failure of promises in past times, or to anything; you must look away from everything within you and without you, to the Lord Jesus Christ alone; and the moment you commit your soul, with all its sins, guilt, and dreadful depravity, into his hands, to be saved by him wholly, freely, and forever, that moment you will have peace. This is the way of peace, will you walk in it? This is the path of holiness, will you enter upon it? "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned." This is the Saviour's word, believe it, act upon it, hold him to it, and everlasting life is yours! O Saviour,

"Guilty and weak, to thee I fly,
On thy atoning blood rely,
And on thy righteousness depend:
My Lord, my Saviour, and my Friend.

Be all my heart, be all my days
Devoted to thy single praise!
And let my glad obedience prove
How much I owe, how much I love."





GOOD COUNSEL.

GOING up Oxford Street the other day, my attention was directed to a dial over a house of business, under which was written, "DELAY NOT, TIME FLIES!" Here, I thought, is good advice. I know not what was the precise idea which the writer wished to convey; but it is applicable to a variety of subjects. Let us look at a few.

Have you a quarrel with any one? "Delay not" to make it up, for "time flies," and if you do not become reconciled soon, the opportunity will perhaps pass away. Live not at enmity with any one, for this is contrary to the law, which says, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." It is contrary to the gospel, which says, "Be kindly affectioned one to another." It is contrary to your example, which is the Lord Jesus Christ, who prayed for his very murderers, saying, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." "*Let not the sun go down upon your wrath.*"

Have you made an engagement? "Delay not" to fulfil it, for "time flies." Now you may realise your obligation, and discharge it; but if you procrastinate, you may lose the opportunity for ever. Have you engaged to work for God? Then take your place, work while it is called to-day, "time flies," and working will soon be over. Have you engaged to give anything to the cause of God? Redeem your pledge, the present time may be lent you for the purpose, to-morrow may be too late.

Have you been reconciled to God? Are you at peace with him? If not, "delay not, time flies," and you may be called away in an unreconciled state. Death is at the door. The Judge is on his way. The great white throne will soon appear, the books will be opened, and we shall be judged according to those things which are written in the books, every one according to his works. Live no longer God's enemy, lest you should die so; for it must be truly dreadful to enter his presence, after having lived here for years in a state of enmity with him, and opposition to him. Oh, be reconciled to him! He beseeches you by us, to cast away your weapons of rebel-

lion, to submit to his method of salvation, and to receive a full pardon at his hands. Can you refuse?

Have you secured a Friend, who can and will stand by you in all your troubles, and sustain you in your last dying struggles? "Delay not, time flies," and you may need such a friend before you have secured him. There is only one who can be all that you want a friend to be, and that is Jesus. He is a friend that loveth at all times. A friend that sticketh closer than a brother. But do you *know* him? Are you *familiar* with him? Can you *trust* him? Have you *committed* the keeping of your soul to him? He only can soothe your sorrows, supply your wants, guide your steps, conquer your foes, and make you more than a conqueror over sin, death, hell, and the grave. His friendship may be secured; but "delay not, time flies," if you neglect to seek him *now*, you may fail to find him *when* you wish.

Have you sought grace for future trials, that you may bear them with Christian patience, and be improved by them in your Christian character? If not, "delay not, times flies." There is a fulness of grace in *Jesus*. It is to be had. But it must be

sought, and sought early, earnestly, and with importunity. The apostle says, "Let us have grace." "Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." Jesus is waiting to be gracious. God delighteth in mercy. "Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help us in time of need."

Have you obtained satisfactory evidence for heaven? If not, "delay not, time flies." Live not in a world like this, in times like these, without the inward witness of the Holy Spirit, without scriptural assurance that if your earthly house, which is a tabernacle, be dissolved, you have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. In a word, whatever good remains to be done, whatever evil remains to be overcome, whatever engagements have to be fulfilled, whatever duty ought to be performed, think of the inscription on the dial, "DE-LAY NOT, TIME FLIES." "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might, for there is neither work nor device in the grave to which we are fast hastening." "Be not slothful, but imitators of *them who*, through faith and patience, now *inherit the promises.*" "Time flies," there-

“delay not” to flee from danger, to
e to Jesus, and to secure the gift of God,
rich is eternal life through Jesus Christ
r Lord.

“ Be it my only wisdom here,
To serve the Lord with filial fear,
With loving gratitude :
Superior sense may I display,
By shunning every evil way,
And walking in the good.

Oh, may I still from sin depart !
A wise and understanding heart,
Jesus, to me be given ;
And let me through thy Spirit know,
To glorify my God below,
And find my way to heaven.

O let thy Spirit shed abroad
The love, the perfect love of God,
In this cold heart of mine !
O might he now descend, and rest,
And dwell for ever in my breast,
And make it all divine !

Take the dear purchase of thy blood,
My friend and advocate with God,
My ransom and my peace :
Surety, who all my debt hast paid,
For all my sins atonement made,
‘The Lord my righteousness.’”





NO COMPLAINING.

"Wherefore doth a living man complain?"—

LAM. iii. 39.

COMPLAINING is a bad business. It is unbecoming in a sinner, and it is unworthy a saint. Complain! Why, have we not all more than we deserve? If we had our desert, should we not be debarred every comfort,—should we not be excluded from hope,—and would not our portion be in the bottomless pit? Complain! What, with so many mercies, surrounded by so many sources of pleasure, and with such a bright prospect before us! Complain! No, let us leave off immediately if we have begun,—and determine, in the Lord's strength, not to begin if we have not. They who complain much to men, have very little to do with God; for prayer will make us leave off complaining, or complaining will deprive prayer of all its life and power.

But you have had losses. Well, suppose you have, look at what you have left,

as well as at what you have lost. You have *life*, you are *a living man*; you might have been cut off, for you have no right to life, you lie absolutely at God's mercy. You might have been a corpse, a lost soul; but you are not, therefore do not complain! You have *hope*; for be as vile as you may, the gospel lays a foundation for your hope. Believing in Jesus, your sins will be pardoned, your losses will be sanctified, and your soul will be saved. Hope is a light in the darkest night, an anchor in the most terrific storm, and a pillow for the weary head in this trying world. Look to Jesus, and hope for all you need, for all he has promised, for all that can really do you good, but—never complain. You have many *mercies*,—new mercies every morning,—the same mercies renewed every day. All you have is from mercy. You are not entitled by law to the slightest alleviation. All flows to you from the kind heart of God, on the ground of the glorious sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. You have national mercies, home mercies, and heart mercies; and not only so, but if you walk with God, your mercies will be endless; *thank God then*, and take courage, but—*never complain*. You have opportunities

to do good, and if you have a kind benevolent heart, you will esteem the small favour. You may visit the sick comfort them; you may relieve the poor and cheer them; you may teach the young and benefit them; you may induce persons to attend God's house, and perhaps in this way mentally save them. You may do good every day, and do good at little cost in a variety of ways; up, then, and for the good of others, but—never complain.

Never complain, for what good will it do? It pays no debts,—performs no duty,—heals no wounds,—removes no troubles,—relieves no sorrows,—conquers no enemies,—procures no blessings. It never does good to the complainer, or to those who listen to the complaints. It is pure mixed evil. Turn your complaints into prayers, pour them into the bosom of God, and then good will come from them in no other way. Complain! Why, what evil will it prevent? Will it keep poverty? Will it scare Satan? Will it banish doubts? Will it calm the storm? Will it smooth the rugged path? No. *It will add to every burden,—increase every sorrow,—strengthen every foe,—*

every prospect,—weaken every grace,—and fill you with unbelief, self-pity, and pride: mourn then before God, but never murmur at anything that comes from God; bear your trials patiently, but—never complain. Upon what principle can you justify it? Surely there is nothing in God's nature, in God's book, or in God's ways, that will justify your complaining: there is nothing in your state, or circumstances, or prospects, that will justify your complaining. Complainers are bad companions, worthless church members, and inconsistent Christians, therefore—never complain.

“Oh, sir,” says some one, “if you knew my afflictions, disappointments, fears, and foes, you would not wonder at my complaining.” Yes, I should, for ten to one if you would have had so many trials but for your complaining disposition. If you love complaining, you will never want something to complain about; and if you complain under your present troubles, expect greater. You have no real cause to complain while you have so many mercies left you, and if you were only grateful for what you have, God would soon give you *many more*. He loves to heap favours

upon the grateful; but who likes to assist those who are everlastingly complaining? Some complain of their husbands, others of their wives, others of their children, others of their parents, others of their employment, others of their residence, others of their neighbours, others of their friends, others of their wants, others—of what? Where shall I end? Complainers and complaints are endless. But “*wherefore doth a living man complain?*” Sin procured all he complains of. Grace would turn the greatest cross into a blessing. Brethren, let us check the complaining spirit in ourselves, for if we do not it will grow upon us. Pastors are complaining of people, and people of pastors, and both pastors and people of deacons, and what good does all this do? Let us admonish, exhort, entreat, reason, and pray; this may do good. Let us look over the catalogue of the mercies we have in hand, and the property we have in hope, and then complain if we can. Rather let us seek grace to be grateful, humble, diligent, and devoted to God; let us cast our sorrows where God has cast our sins, and let us have grace whereby we may serve God *acceptably* with reverence and godly fear.

Hear what God says, and act upon it, and complaining will soon die a natural death,
*"Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me.
and to him that ordereth his conversation
aright will I show the salvation of God
(Psalm l. 23).*

"Jesus, my Saviour, once thy foe,
And Satan's wretched slave,
I stood upon the brink of woe,
But prov'd thy pow'r to save.

Thy mercy, though by me unsought,
Kept me from falling in ;
Thy arm my full deliverance wrought,
Thy grace forgave my sin.

Thy Spirit taught my guilty tongue
To aim at prayer and praise ;
And thou art now my shield and song,
The guide of all my ways.

Thy comforts, countless as the sands,
Now crown my favoured lot ;
And each my warmest praise demands,
But ah ! how oft forgot !

Shall one so favour'd e'er repine !
Or one so vile complain !
No, let me praise, for thou art mine,—
And mine thou wilt remain."





“THE LORD IS THY KEEPER.”

Ps. cxli. 5.

OUR safety and happiness lie in what the Lord is to us. In darkness, he is our light; in weakness, he is our strength; in danger, he is our refuge; at all times, he is our keeper. He never trusts his people in any hands but his own. “Yea, he loved the people; all his saints are in thy hand; and they sit down at thy feet; every one shall receive of thy words” (Deut. xxxiii. 3). The Great Shepherd has said, “No one shall pluck them out of my hand.” Let us notice,—

1. *The objects of the divine care.* His people,—his children,—his sheep,—the whole of them. To each it may be said, “*The Lord is thy keeper.*” But how are they known? How shall *we* know that the Lord is our keeper? He keepeth all those who feel that they cannot keep themselves. And the Holy Spirit teaches every believer that he needs a keeper,—that he has neither wisdom nor power to keep himself,—that he *must be kept* by one greater and wiser than *himself*,—or he is undone. Those whom the

“ *The Lord is thy Keeper.*” 209

Lord keeps, perceive that they are exposed to foes and dangers innumerable,—that they are never safe for one moment if left to themselves,—that they must fall, except an omnipotent hand uphold them,—that their enemies will triumph over them, except the Lord be a wall of fire round about them. Therefore, they put themselves into the Lord's hands for protection. They commit themselves unto him, as unto a house of defence, to save them. They daily cry unto him to keep them. Their prayer is, “Keep me as the apple of the eye: hide me under the shadow of thy wings.” “O keep my soul and deliver me, for I trust in thee.” To them the name of the Lord is a strong tower, and they run into it and are safe. The Lord always keeps those who are busily employed in his work. The diligent servant is safe. The obedient child is sure of protection. If we feel that we cannot keep ourselves; if we perceive that we are surrounded by dangers and foes; if we put ourselves into the hands of God for protection; if we daily call upon him to keep us; if we exercise faith in his word of promise; and if we are actively engaged *in his service*, no doubt but the Lord will *keep us*. Let us, therefore, consider,—

2. *Our omnipotent Protector.* Believe "Jehovah is thy keeper." Jehovah, in his persons and perfections, is engaged to thy protection. "He keepeth the feeble in his saints." He commands us to cheer the weak, fearful, and drooping people with song. He says, "In that day sinners shall be gathered unto her, A vineyard of red wine. The Lord do keep it; I will water it every day; lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day" (Is. xxvii. 2, 3). But *when* does the Lord keep us? Always, every moment. But especially in times of peculiar distress. He is always nearest when most needed. Often nearest when he is least perceived. In seasons of heavy trouble. He does not keep us *from* trouble; but he keeps us *in* trouble, and he keeps us *by* trouble. "The Lord trieth the righteous." He keeps us in the midst of many fears. Our fears dishonour him. They distress us. But in the midst of them he keeps us, and he speaks to us, "Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God. I will strengthen thee; yea, I will uphold thee with my right hand of my righteousness" (Isa. 41. 10). And when the night grows dark and the storm beats more fiercely, and

"The Lord is thy Keeper." 211

fears grow stronger, and we tremble and are afraid, he again says, "I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not" (Is. xli. 13). From *what* does the Lord keep his people? Not from common calamities. Not from severe afflictions. For they are a poor and an afflicted people. But he keeps them from sinking under their troubles. Good hope makes them buoyant. It keeps the head above water. It points to the rainbow in the clouds. To the distant streak of light, the harbinger of approaching day. The Christian may cry, "I sink in deep waters." But he shall also have to say, "He sent from above, he took me, he drew me out of many waters." He will keep them from being overcome and conquered by inward corruption. It will work, and work mightily. It will struggle, and struggle like the drowning man. It may for a season bring them into captivity, and cause them to cry out, "I am carnal, sold under sin. Oh, wretched man that I am!" But sin shall not have dominion over them; for they are not under the law, but under grace. He will keep them from going back into the world, and apostatising from the truth. *They may be tempted to it. They may*

feel secretly inclined to do so. They may rashly conclude, under circumstances, that they are apostates. But no one ever did apostatise yet, who had God for his keeper. If God undertake to keep, he *can* do it; he *will* do it.

How does he keep them? By angelic powers. "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation" (Heb. i. 14). And as it was promised to the Head, so it is also to every member, "He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways" (Ps. xci. ii). Holy and blessed beings may we never forget that, under Jesus, you are our keepers in this dangerous world! He keeps them also by the indwelling and operation of the Holy Spirit. Our bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost. He abides and works in every believer. Having claimed us in the Saviour's name, he never renounces his claim. Having begun a good work, he never leaves it unfinished, but will complete it in the day of Christ. He keeps them by his sacred word. This is a light unto their feet, and a lantern *unto their paths*. It feeds them, and *renews their strength*. It cheers them, and *animates them on their journey*. It pre-

serves them from a thousand wiles. *Why* does he keep them? *Why!* Because he loves and values them. No parent ever loved a child as he loves the meanest of his people. No miser ever valued his gold as he values the poorest of his saints. And then he has pledged himself to do so. He has said, "*I will keep it.*" Besides, he can glorify himself by doing so. Oh, what glory will redound to his holy name, when the complete number of his elect,—when every lamb of his fold, shall appear perfect before him in Zion! Not one missing. Not one lost. No; not inconsistent Jonah; nor backsliding Peter; nor even the unaccountable Solomon.

My Christian friend, we shall need keeping in the future; never let us forget this. Let us make sure that the Lord is our keeper. Let us daily seek his keeping; never going out into the world, until we have put ourselves into his hand, by a solemn act of faith and prayer. Never let us, for one moment, trust to our own vigilance, power, or sagacity; for if we do, we shall certainly fall. Self-dependence always procures a fall. Young Christian, look to Jesus, cleave to Jesus, trust in *him*, and he will keep thee as a lamb in

214 “*The Lord is thy Keeper.*”

the fold, as a child in a castle of rocks.
Weak Christian, look to this when Satan
tempts you, when your heart misgives you,
when fears oppress you, when everything
appears to run cross and contrary ;—“ The
Lord is thy keeper ; the Lord is thy shade
upon thy right hand.”

“ A sovereign Protector I have,
Unseen, yet for ever at hand,
Unchangeably faithful to save,
Almighty to rule and command.

From evil secure, and its dread,
I rest, if my Saviour is nigh,
And songs his kind presence indeed,
Shall in the night season supply.

Kind author and ground of my hope,
Thee, thee, for my God I avow,
My glad Ebenezer set up,
And own thou hast help'd me till now.

I muse on the years that are past,
Wherein my defence Thou hast proved ;
Nor wilt Thou relinquish at last,
A sinner so signally loved.”





THE SILENT MONITOR.

As we always need counsel, caution, or admonition, the Lord seems to have placed preachers in every situation, to teach, instruct, and do us good, if we will listen to them. He that is willing to learn will never need an instructor. I have often been struck with the thought, that everything appears to convey a lesson to the docile and spiritual mind. As I was riding to Amersham a short time ago, having never passed that road before, I was engaged in noticing the objects of interest that presented themselves, and observing the number of miles and the mile-stones we passed on the road. At length we came to one mile-stone which seemed to have nothing to communicate, for every letter was effaced. Well, I thought, here is an instructive monitor. This stone does not answer the design for which it was placed here, but it may answer another. Does it not resemble many old professors of religion? Are they not like this old

mile-stone? Does not this mile-stone very well represent them? Notice,—

First, *Where it stood.* It was in the road, in its proper place. Just so these persons appear to be in the road to heaven, and we hope they are, in one sense, in their proper place. But they make no progress. There they are now, just where they were twenty or thirty years ago. When we first knew them, they were just what they now are. They talk just the same. They walk just the same. They had come to a certain point where they made a dead stop, and we have seen no advancement since. They appear to know no more of themselves, no more of Christ, no more of the excellency of real religion, than they did. They are old babes, and need that one teach them again what be the first principles of the doctrine of Christ. They have no more zeal for God, no more love to souls, no more liberality in God's cause, no more concern for the improvement or increase of the church than they had years ago. There they *stand*, but they should *run* the race set before them. There they *stand*, but they should *work* while it is called to-day. There they *stand*, but they should *press on* toward the mark for the

prize. There they *stand*, but they should *move on*, saying to those about them, "Come with us, and we will do you good." Notice,—

Secondly, *What it had been.* It had been once an instructive stone, its characters were plain, and its design evident. Well, so some professors. Years ago we thought we could make them out. It appeared as if the Lord had engraved the engraving that was upon them. We fancied they were the epistles of Christ, written with the finger of the living God. They were not only in their places, but they appeared to be ornaments, and instructive monuments. You might hear them speaking in the Sabbath-school, you might see them distributing the religious tract, you might observe them endeavouring to bring others under the word. But they left off these things by degrees. They appeared to forget the design of their being brought into the church. They gradually sunk down into a state of selfishness. The letters were by degrees erased, and now there they stand; and if a stranger were to try to discover by them what real religion is, or seek direction from their conduct in the heavenly road, he would seek in vain. Alas, the

gold is become dim; the wine is mixed with water! They are not what they were once. Notice,—

Thirdly, *What it was now.* A mere useless lump of stone. It occupied the place of a good mile-stone. It deceived the traveller who sought to learn the distance from Amersham by it. True, it did no positive harm; but then it did no good. How many useless members are there in the Church of Christ! There they are standing idle all the day long. Others may toil, but they will not stir. Others may give, but they will not part with their cash. Others may mourn over the low estate of Zion, but they are not affected. They are mere church lumber, useless mile-stones, cumberers of the ground. Ah, they say, things were so different when I was young! When I first joined the church, I did so and so, and so and so! Well, but why not try and make things different now? Why not do something now, if you used to work once? No, I leave it to the younger members. Indeed! and who signed your discharge from service? Who gave you leave to retire into inglorious ease? If you are to remain a member of the church, you ought to work for the church

and *with* the church; and if you do not, how can the Master at last call you a "good and faithful servant?" Notice,—

Fourthly, *What it needed.* It needed to be renewed. It wanted the iron chisel, the heavy mallet, and the mason's strong arm. Many a blow would be necessary before it would appear a useful, intelligible mile-stone. And what do these professors need? Need! they also need to be renewed. They want the power of the Holy Spirit to be put forth in their experience; they want the hammer of God's word brought down with force upon the conscience; and they need some iron dispensation to make them feel their condition, and engrave them afresh. And if they were placed where they are by the Lord's hand, they will be so dealt with. If gentle means will not do, severe measures will be resorted to. The Lord will melt and try them. He will turn his hand upon them, and will thoroughly purge away their dross, and take away all their sin. Our churches need the power of the Holy Spirit put forth in them. Many of our members require to be roughly handled, for they are settled upon their lees. We may warn *them*, exhort them, invite them, threaten

them : but it is like trying to engrave the old hardened mile-stone with a feather. Nothing short of the power of God will do. The Holy Spirit must come upon us as of old, or there will be no effectual work, no permanent change.

Reader, where are you? In the church or in the world? Are you *standing* in the way, instead of *running* the race? Are you *idle*, instead of being *active*? Have you ever been different to what you are now? Were you once more lively, more spiritual, more zealous, more active, more entirely devoted to God? If so, how can you account for the change? How do you justify it? How can you be satisfied with it? Are you *useless*? If so, how can you be happy? How can you have patience with yourself? How will you face the Lord when he comes to take an account of his servants? What will you say for yourself? You dishonour God's cause. You dispirit God's servants. You mislead young professors. You do incalculable mischief by the course you are pursuing. "Repent, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." You need renewing, seek it. Seek *it daily*. Seek it heartily. Seek it, and *never rest* until you obtain it. Do not be

the useless mile-stone, and give occasion to your friends to say, "That is just brother — ;" but arise, repent, re-
1, and consecrate your energies to the
1.

" Ah, give me, Lord, myself to see !
Against myself to watch and pray !
How weak am I, when left by thee !
How frail ! how apt to fall away !
If but a moment thou withdraw,
That moment sees me break thy law !

Jesus, the sinner's only trust,
Let me now feel thy grace infus'd ;
Ah, raise the fallen from the dust,
Nor break a reed already bruise'd ;
Smile on this cheerless heart again,
Nor let me seek thy face in vain !

Let thy meek mind descend on me,
Thy Holy Spirit from above ;
Assist me, Lord, to follow thee,
Drawn by th' endearing cords of love.
Made perfect by thy cleansing blood,
Completely sav'd and born of God !"





A WORD TO MINISTERS.

TWENTY GOOD REASONS WHY MINISTERS SHOULD
AVOID CONTRACTING DEBT'S.

BECAUSE God has plainly forbidden it, in that gospel which they preach; and a minister should so walk and act as to feel at liberty to preach from every plain text in the New Testament; even from that which says, "*One no man anything;*" which he cannot consistently do if he is in debt.

2. Because it is a violation of the law of love, which says, "*Love thy neighbour as thyself;*" which he cannot do if he contract debts which he cannot honourably discharge when called upon.

3. Because every minister knows within a little the amount of his salary, and should feel it to be an imperative duty to live within his income.

4. Because ministers are to be examples to the flock, which they are to lead in the way of holiness; but if the minister run into debt, how can he reprove, or admonish, or even blame the people, if they follow his example?

5. Because if he be properly influenced and practising economy, it is very seldom necessary. What minister can look around and not see some worldly person living upon the same amount of income without involving himself in debt?

6. Because it wounds God's cause, which should be dearer to us than any fleshly indulgence; and opens the mouths of enemies, which we should study to keep shut.

7. Because it lays a stumbling-block in the way of souls, who think lightly of our religion, and will not listen to our message, on account of it.

8. Because it contradicts our profession, for we all profess to obey the word and imitate the example of Him, who never contracted a debt, nor sanctioned any one in doing so.

9. Because it is opposed to the duty of self-denial, which we are called upon to practise; very few are the cases of debt which might not have been prevented by scriptural self-denial.

10. Because it furnishes unprincipled persons with an argument against religion, and has a tendency to harden them in their *sins*.

11. *Because it injures honest tradesmen.*

and prevents them keeping the precept which we are violating.

12. Because it is very generally for some unnecessary indulgence in dress, furniture, food, a large dwelling, &c.; for which no minister of Christ should ever contract a debt.

13. Because it indicates thoughtlessness, improvidence, or want of principle; whereas ministers should be thoughtful, prudent, and unquestionably upright.

14. Because we have no right to expect that God will work for us in His providence to pay such debts, or to call upon our people to do so.

15. Because it has often introduced confusion into a church, and put weapons into the hands of disaffected persons wherewith to accomplish their unrighteous purposes.

16. Because it destroys independence of mind, for "the borrower is servant to the lender;" whereas the minister of Christ ought to be the most independent man under heaven.

17. Because it discovers a want of tenderness of conscience, for which every servant of Christ ought to be exemplary.

18. Because it brings us into soul-trouble, and gives Satan an occasion against us, of

which he will not be backward to avail himself.

19. Because it mars our usefulness, and cuts off the means of doing good: the godly are wounded, the ungodly are hardened, and we have not to give to him that needeth (Ephes. iv. 28).

20. Because it will throw a gloom around our sick bed, plant thorns in our dying pillow, and furnish matter for scandal when we are lying in the grave.

Brethren, are these things so? If they are, let us determine in God's strength, that, as His cause is dear unto us,—as His name is called upon us,—as His gospel is entrusted to our keeping,—as our people look to us for an example,—as our enemies are watching for an occasion against us,—as God has forbidden it,—as Satan makes a handle of it,—as worldlings are stumbled by it,—and as every one of us must give account of himself to God, that, whatever sacrifices we may have to make, whatever self-denial we may have to practise, we will not contract any debts which we cannot discharge when called upon so to do.



A WORD TO DEACONS AND CHURCHES.

TWENTY GOOD REASONS WHY CHURCHES SHOULD
ADEQUATELY SUPPORT, AND DEACONS PROMPTLY
AND PUNCTUALLY PAY, THEIR MINISTERS.

BECAUSE, not doing so, they neglect a very solemn and important duty, which God requires at their hands; for "so hath the Lord ordained, that they which preach the gospel should live .of the gospel."

2. Because not doing so shows that they have not a proper regard to a minister's usefulness and comfort; for if they had, they would make such an effort as would soon prove it to be practicable.

3. Because not doing so evidences that they have not a correct sense of justice, which requires that they should not seek to engage and benefit by the services of any one without a suitable remuneration.

4. Because not doing so, the minister *cannot discharge his duties and observe the precepts of God's holy word.*

5. Because not doing so proves that though they profess principles more pure and powerful than those of the world, they are not influenced by them; for many worldly men have too high a sense of honour to engage the services of any one, and then refuse adequately to reward him.

6. Because not doing so leads the pastor to think that his services are undervalued, which depresses his spirits and weakens his energies.

7. Because not doing so hinders him in the study of God's word, fills his mind with anxiety about worldly things, and often makes his sermons meagre.

8. Because not doing so prevents his procuring proper materials to assist him in his work, as well as harasses and burdens his mind.

9. Because not doing so obliges him to contract debts, and prevents him discharging them at the proper time, which is alike discreditable to him and them.

10. Because not doing so often makes parties in a church; one party sympathising with the minister whom they consider to be injured, and the other with some selfish leader who wishes to keep him poor.

11. Because not doing so leads ministers

223 *A Word to Deacons and Churches.*

to listen to calls from other places, and often occasions very undesirable removals.

12. Because not doing so opens the mouths of worldlings, who have a keen eye to discern between right and wrong, and who naturally expect different things from professors of religion, whose conduct they are never backward to censure or condemn.

13. Because not doing so is a discredit to the voluntary principle, and practically refutes some of its most powerful arguments.

14. Because not doing so is a species of dishonesty, as every *attempt* to obtain or retain the services of any man without a proper remuneration must be.

15. Because not doing so is treating the minister of Christ worse than a common servant or mechanic; whereas Christ has said, "The labourer is worthy of his reward;" which reward should be just and equal.

16. Because not doing so betrays a want of proper feeling, and leads consistent persons to question whether such churches can be influenced by the grace of God and *the truth* of the gospel.

17. Because not doing so injures the

A Word to Deacons and Churches. 229

pastor's usefulness, and prevents his carrying out his various plans of benevolence for the spread of the gospel both at home and abroad.

18. Because not doing so, the church loses its character, dishonours the Lord, grieves the Holy Spirit, and must expect to wither and decay.

19. Because not doing so troubles a pastor's mind, reflects on the gospel he preaches, and violates a sacred principle.

20. Because not doing so discourages young men of talent from entering the ministry, and thus brings its own punishment with it.

Brethren, if you love the Saviour who redeemed the church with His own blood,—if you prize the presence, power, and operations of the Holy Spirit,—if you value the gospel ministry, which Christ himself has instituted, and which is the instrument by which God usually works,—if you esteem the principles which you profess, and which bear the divine stamp upon them,—if you would see the church happy and the ministry successful,—if you would see sinners brought to God, and saints rejoicing in His holy name,—if you would see our pulpits filled by godly and

230 *A Word to Deacons and Churches.*

talented men,—if you would obey the precepts of the gospel, or make the law the rule of your lives,—if you would win the respect of the world around, and have a good report of them which are without,—if you would not injure your pastor's usefulness, wound his mind, alienate his affections from you, or break his heart,—in one word, if you would be what every deacon and church of Christ ought to be, viz. : holy, honest, conscientious, and consistent,—then provide your ministers with an **HONOURABLE MAINTENANCE**; and pay them *promptly, regularly, and cheerfully* what you raise for them.

“ Who can a pastor's heart express
The unutterable tenderness;
Beyond what fondest mothers prove
The yearning pangs of softest love?

He only comprehends, who knows
Whence every grace and blessing flows,
Who feels but never can explain
The bowels of the Son of man.”





THE POOR MAN'S COURSE AND COMFORT.

IT is no uncommon thing for a poor man to be in trouble, for man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward. The single man has some troubles, the married often more. Want of work,—want of health,—want of skill,—want of proper remuneration for his work,—all these are at times sources of trouble. Hard times,—hard masters,—hard work,—hard speeches,—these also add to his troubles. There is trouble at the factory, trouble at the mill, trouble in the shop, and trouble in the field. Some troubles come from God, but more are the consequence of our own folly. However, trouble is trouble, come from what cause or quarter it may; and the great thing is to know what to do with it, and how to get rid of it.

Well, we are going to look at a *poor man in trouble*, to point out what he did with his trouble, and how he got rid of it. He lived many years ago, his witness is

in heaven, and his record is in God's book. Hear it! "This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles" (Ps. xxxiv. 6). No doubt but he had temporal troubles, perhaps just such as yours. A large family and a small income. Hard work and a weak body. Little employment and many demands. Providence seemed to frown upon him, and many things to go wrong with him. Then he had spiritual troubles. A hard heart, a bad memory, a bitter enemy, many fears, distressing doubts, perplexing cogitations, and violent temptations, separate or combined, at times troubled him. God hid his face. Unbelief gained strength. Satan suggested hard thoughts. His own heart misgave him. He looked back with regret, and forward with foreboding. He looked within with alarm, and upward without confidence. A cloud covered him, he fancied all things were against him, and he drooped and hung down his head. He felt that he was a poor man. He had no stock in hand. He had nothing of his own with which he could be pleased, or in *which* he could trust. Tried in body and *in mind*: tried in his family and in his

circumstances. Yet he did not lie down in despair, he did not give way to despondency. What did he?

“*He cried unto the Lord.*” This was the very best, the wisest thing he could do. Had he cried to creatures, they might have been destitute of sympathy, or unable or unwilling to help. He cried unto the Lord, his father’s God, and his own God. Unto the Lord, who is full of pity, plentiful in mercy, and pledged to answer prayer. To the Lord, who is accessible at all times, and in all places; who never said to the seed of Jacob, “Seek ye me,” in vain. To the Lord, who had heard millions of poor souls in trouble, and had never refused to deliver one. To the Lord, who sent or permitted the trouble, to furnish him with a message, give him an occasion, and compel him to apply at his throne. He cried unto the Lord, he cried from his heart, he cried with his voice; his prayer was simple, earnest, importunate, and therefore successful. He carried his trouble to the Lord, he told his heavenly Father all about it, and he left it at his throne. He went with all his fears, cares, and sorrows; he opened his heart, he unburdened his soul, he relieved his mind.

He cried as one in distress. He cried to one who could help. He cried as one who hoped to be heard and answered. He went again, and again, and again, until he obtained relief. He cried in trouble, he cried because of trouble, he cried to be delivered from trouble, nor did he cry in vain. Dear reader, are you poor? Are you in trouble? Is your trouble great? Is it spiritual or temporal, or both? Carry it to the Lord. Do as this poor man did. He is set before you as an example. This verse was written on purpose to encourage, comfort, and direct you. Say not that you know not what to do. Cry unto the Lord. Say not that you know not what will be the end. Cry unto the Lord, and he will deliver you from all your troubles. You have a friend at God's right hand. Jesus is there. He knows what trouble is. He knows what are the effects of trouble on the soul, the spirits, and the animal frame. He has been tried like you are. He was made our High Priest, because he can have compassion on the ignorant, and those that are out of the way. God will hear you for his sake. He will answer you when you plead his dear name. Imitate

this poor man, and in doing so, remember that the Lord

"Saved him out of all his troubles." They were numerous. They were painful. Perhaps some of them had been long continued. They required an omnipotent helper, an all-wise deliverer, a present God; and prayer brought the power, wisdom, and presence of God to bear upon the poor man's circumstances, and he was saved out of all his troubles. God loves to save us from our troubles as well as our sins. He saved Israel from Egypt, David from all his foes, and Jeremiah from the dungeon; he is saving many from trouble now, and he will save us. Many are this day singing their songs of deliverance, to the praise of his glorious grace; and he is saying to us, "Call upon me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee; and thou shalt glorify me." Let us not, then, nurse our troubles, encourage our fears, or give way to our foes; but let us go to our God by prayer, let us go in faith, and let us expect that as this poor man cried and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles, so he will hear, appear for, and deliver us. We have the same promises as he had our claim

upon God is as good as his was, and we have more to plead than he could have, for we have the dear name, precious blood, finished work, and constant intercession of Jesus, the High Priest of our profession.

Poor, tried, tempted, troubled, tempest-tossed soul, look up; yield no longer to thy fears, listen no longer to Satan, that enemy to God and man; think not of sinking under thy load, but "roll thy burden on the Lord, and he shall sustain thee;" cast "all your care upon him, for he careth for you;" cry day and night unto God, this will prove your election and secure your deliverance. Hear what your Saviour says, "Shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily" (Luke xviii. 7, 8). That trouble will never hurt you that leads you to the Lord; the pain it causes is salutary, and the energy it awakens does you credit. Carry all your troubles to your God, plead with him to sanctify them to you, and then remove them from you; but seek their sanctification first, and let their removal be a secondary consideration. Be *jealous* lest you should lose the benefit of

an affliction, for no trouble is sent, but with a special object in view, and if the present trouble does not accomplish that object, another and perhaps a heavier trouble may be sent. Reader, do you *know* the God of Israel, who delivered this poor man? Has he ever delivered you? We know of no more pitiable object, than a sinner in trouble with no God to go to, no promise to cheer him, no blessed Spirit to soothe and comfort him. We wonder not that some fly to strong drink, and others to self-destruction. My dear friend, seek the poor man's God, look to the poor man's Saviour, read the poor man's book, pray for the poor man's comforter (the Holy Spirit), and so will you arrive safely at the poor man's home, where toil, trouble, disappointment, perplexity, sin, or sorrow, can never come.

"Teach me, O my Guide, my Friend,
Heavenly Counsellor divine,
To thy secret purpose bend
This obedient heart of mine,
Make thine utmost pleasure known,
All thy will on me be done."



THE FEAR OF DEATH.

"And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to homage."—HEB. II. 15.

THERE is always something solemn, and generally something appalling, in death. We cannot love it. It is the effect of sin. It is the enemy of our nature. All the circumstances connected with it are painful and trying, and then the unseen, the unknown, the eternal world beyond it. When we reflect on these things, the thoughts will arise, "If I am deceived! If I should be wrong! If I should find out my mistake too late!" Dwelling upon such thoughts naturally makes us sad, they weaken our faith, they dim the eye of hope, and they give Satan an occasion against us. To dwell on them is to strengthen them, and to deepen the gloomy impression which they make. Some dwell on them so much, and so frequently, that they can seldom enjoy their *present mercies*, and can never look forward to their departure from this world

without gloom; it embitters life, and renders the idea of death dreadful. This is wrong, decidedly wrong. We should look from death to Jesus, and never look at death but through Jesus. He has conquered death for us, and has deprived the monster of his sting. Nothing can make death dreadful but sin; and if sin is pardoned, even that cannot. But if we believe in Jesus, if we have committed our souls to him, if we are living to promote his glory, our sins are most certainly pardoned. God has blotted them out in the blood of his dear Son, and he assures us that they shall never be mentioned against us. We have his word for our security, and he has added his oath, that we might have strong consolation. We should trust in God's faithful word, and do honour to the blood of Jesus by believing that it will save us from all condemnation.

"But my faith is weak." So it may be, and yet weak faith will lay hold on an omnipotent Saviour, and bring everlasting salvation to the soul. "But my fears are strong." Yes, and so they will be so long as you nurse them, and look at yourself. *or at death, instead of looking to Jesus.*

"But I find it so hard to believe." So it is while we attempt it in our own strength, but when we seek the Holy Spirit's aid it is easy enough. "But I have no assurance of my interest in Christ." Perhaps not, nor is it likely you will, while you look into self, at your sins, or at death: nor even if you make assurance your principal object. Faith is giving credit to God's word, exercising confidence in God's faithfulness, and relying on the perfect work of Christ for life and salvation. Out of this grows our assurance of our interest in Christ. Now if, instead of giving credit to God's word, placing confidence in God's faithfulness, and relying on the finished work of Christ, you are hunting about for the sense of your interest in Christ, or for what you call assurance, you are not likely to obtain it. You must renounce self, rely simply on Jesus, and expect him to save you, because he has promised to save all that trust in his name; so doing you are safe, you have nothing to fear from death, and you will be happy. But the moment you look from Christ to self, place confidence in your evidences, or think of death apart from the infinite sacrifice of Jesus, you get into bondage.

It must be so. It always will be so. Death can do no harm to a believer in Christ. It ought not to be the object of his dread. His sins are pardoned, God is his Father, the Lord Jesus is his Advocate, the Holy Spirit is his Guide, and Heaven is his Father's house, and his home. God is always, and everywhere, his Father; no matter, therefore, whether in the body or out of it, whether in this world or another, he is safe; death cannot affect his state, it can make no alteration in the relationship. Believe, then, in Jesus, look to Jesus, place your entire dependance on Jesus, and never trouble about death until it comes; it is no business of yours to-day, it belongs to to-morrow; and when death comes, Jesus will come with it, and he will give you grace to die as a Christian, as he has given you grace to live like one.

But some, from the weakness of the nerves, or a naturally melancholy temperament, or from bad training, are always in bondage from the fear of death. Some fear dying, and some fear the consequences of death. They never look forward but with gloom, thus making themselves sad, and all about them. Now, such seldom fear death when it comes; it is never

found to be what they feared. The fear of death is gone before they come to it, and the dreaded act of dying is comparatively easy. I have often known this to be true, and my friend Mrs. Chin, who was lately called home to be for ever with the Lord, was a remarkable instance of it. She was always fearing death. In vain I told her that Jesus had conquered death, that he would be with her in it, that she would be disappointed when she came to it. In vain I directed her to look to the cross, and not to the grave; to Jesus, and not death; or assured her that at evening-time it would be light. A gleam of light would sometimes irradiate her dark mind, a little joy would occasionally drop into her troubled soul; but generally a deep sigh would say, "I am in bondage still." Nothing that I could say, no prayer that I could offer, would give her more than transient relief. But how was it with her at last? A letter from her daughter, in whose house she died, which now lies before me, says, "*The fear of death had been removed from her mind for some time past, and she longed,*" as she said, "*TO GO HOME.*" Often and often had I told her *that this* would be the case, but she could

not believe me; she feared that I had mistaken her character, that all her past experience was a delusion, and that her Christian friends thought too well of her. Sad were her days, and often sorrowful her nights, and all for want of one thing, and what was that? Just giving Jesus credit for being true to his character, and faithful to his word. But she often feared dying too, and how was it with her in that respect? The same letter says, "She had been ill for nearly a fortnight, but a day or two previous to her decease we thought her better. She was rising to dress to have her bed made, when she suddenly fell back and said, 'I am faint;' she never spoke after, and in about half an hour after this she ceased to breath, and entered into the presence of that Saviour she so many years loved, and whom she so much longed to see."

Reader, are you harassed with the fears of death? encourage them not, but confide in the care, kindness, and grace of thy Saviour, "who hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." Live upon him now by faith, live for him, endeavouring to promote his cause, and he will never leave thee in the

article of death, or suffer thee to be deceived. Thousands beside my friend Mrs. Chin have found their fears groundless, and have realised deliverance from them before called to contend with that last enemy. Satan loves to harass you; it is often his suggestions that direct your attention to death, when you ought to be looking to Jesus, and to be rejoicing in his dear name. Death is yours, if you are Christ's. It cannot injure you. It will only undress you, that you may be clothed upon, with your house which is from heaven. It will open the cage-door, and let the bird fly and enjoy its native element. It will knock off every fetter, bring you out of the dungeon of clay, and introduce you to the presence of "the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God." Though your faith be weak, it connects you with the Saviour, it preserves you from all the terrible consequences of death, and entitles you to everlasting life. If you cannot live without Christ, death will never be allowed to separate you from Christ. If you love Christ here, and long to enjoy his presence and his smile, you *will rise* to see Christ in glory, and so be *for ever* with him. Let not death terrify

you, you will not find it what you fear; it will not be when near, what it appears in the distance. The grace that sustains you now will sustain you then, and will make you more than a conqueror over death, through Jesus who has loved you. Jesus, who died for you, will be with you when you are dying, and will give you a glorious and eternal victory over death.

“O God of love, with cheering ray
Gild my expiring streak of day;
Thy love, through each revolving year,
Has wiped away affliction’s tear.

Free me from death’s terrific gloom,
And all the guilt which shrouds the tomb!
Heighten my joys, support my head,
Before I sink among the dead.

May death conclude my toils and tears!
May death destroy my sins and fears!
May death, through Jesus, be my friend!
May death be life when life shall end!

Crown my last moment with thy power—
The latest in my latest hour;
Then to the raptured heights I soar,
Where fears and death are known no more.”





AN INQUIRY FOR THE NEW YEAR.

BELOVED friends, as the Lord has graciously spared us to enter upon another portion of time, it becomes us to ask, How shall we begin it? Much often depends on the beginning. It is important to begin well. Let us reflect. Let us inquire. Let us decide. Shall we not begin it in

Faith? This is the stay, the staff, the stimulus of the soul. Let us afresh exercise faith in God as our Father,—in Jesus as our Saviour,—in the Holy Spirit as our Comforter. Let us believe the love which God hath to us,—that “*God is love.*” Let us take up the promises as the pledges and proofs of his love. He made them to inform us, to cheer us, to draw out our love to him, and our confidence in him. He will fulfil them. He never violated a promise yet. He never will. It is impossible for God to lie, or to prove unfaithful. His throne is not more stable than his promise. *Let us therefore believe the word, seek the blessings, and expect the favours. He*

has promised us wisdom, to understand our way; strength, to prosecute our journey; grace, to subdue our iniquities; pardon, to pacify our consciences; righteousness, to justify our persons; an answer to all our prayers; and a supply of every want. Let us therefore enter upon the new year taking up the promises afresh, and exercising faith in the Almighty and never changing Promiser. And in the prospect of the arduous duties, painful trials, determined foes, and bright prospects which are before us, say, "I will go in the strength of the Lord God: I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only" (Ps. lxxi. 16). Shall we not begin this year also in

Penitence? How many sins we have committed! How many duties we have neglected! How many opportunities for usefulness we have lost! What evil tempers we have displayed! What fearful corruptions still work in our hearts! Let us look to the crucified One, who has borne the punishment of our sins in his own body on the tree, and let us mourn as one mourneth for his only son, and be in bitterness as one that is in bitterness for his first-born. Sorrow, deep and pungent sorrow, for sin, becomes us. Our sins have

248 *An Inquiry for the New Year.*

not been of an ordinary character ; they have been sins against clear light, against tender love, against solemn professions, and against repeated warnings and expostulations. We have sinned against God, and against man. We have sinned amidst the uncertainties of time, and in prospect of the solemnities of eternity. Let us bow before the throne of grace, and make frank confession. Let us go to Gethsemane and Golgotha, and have fellowship with Jesus in his sufferings. Let us earnestly entreat the Holy Spirit to produce deep compunction, and to give us the grace of repentance, that we may sorrow after a godly manner (2 Cor. vii. 9). Nothing will become us more at the beginning of this new year, than deep and profound repentance for sin. But shall we not begin this year also in

Prayer? In special, fervent, and importunate prayer? We need grace, special grace ; therefore we should make use of special prayer. Our prayers have been too formal. They have been offered up too much as a matter of course. There has not been that life, that earnestness, or that importunity in them, that there should have been. God is willing to give what we want. He waits to be gracious unto

us. He has promised that he will not turn a deaf ear to our prayers. But we *must* feel our need. We *must* realise our dependence. We *must* pray in earnest. We *must* ask as if we meant it. Cold prayers will not do. Formal devotion cannot be acceptable. We must *stir up ourselves* to call upon God. Let us fix times for special prayer, and keep them. Let us select subjects for prayer, and stick to them. Let us feel our dependence upon the Holy Spirit as the author of prayer, and seek his direct and powerful operations. Our heavenly Father is saying, "Call upon me, and I will show thee great and mighty things." Our exalted Redeemer is saying, "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, *I will do it.*" The Holy Spirit is saying, "The fervent, effectual prayer of a righteous man *availeth much.*" Let us believe in the efficiency of prayer. Let us try and prove the power of prayer. Let us mix faith and hope with every prayer we present. Let us begin the year by renewing our

Consecration. Let us, with deep devotion, listen to the apostle, "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, *that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which*

250 *An Inquiry for the New Year.*

is your reasonable service: and be not conformed to this world" (Rom. xii. 1, 2). Let us imitate those spoken of by the prophet, "One shall say, I AM THE LORD'S" (Isaiah xliv. 5). Let us retire, let us place ourselves before the cross, immediately under the eye of God; and there let us anew solemnly *surrender* our persons, property, talents, and all we can command, to God and his service: there let us *consecrate* the whole to God, to be his, for his use, and for his glory. And let us endeavour this year to go about our business as consecrated persons, let us consider that we are set apart for God, devoted to God, and that every power is to be held sacred to the glory of God. This would be consistent. This would only be honest, for we are not our own, we are *bought with a price*: and should therefore glorify God in our bodies and spirits which are God's (1 Cor. vi. 19, 20). We are not hired servants, but the absolute property of the Lord Jesus, ransomed by his blood, redeemed by his power, and placed and kept in this world for his glory. Let us enter upon this new period of our existence in a spirit of

Watchfulness. 'The times are dangerous. We are surrounded by snares. We

have traitors within us. We have hosts of enemies all around us. We are in an enemy's country, and are every moment exposed to danger. Let us watch against our foes. Let us watch the intimations of our Lord's will. Let us be sincere, devotional, active, diligent, peaceable, and upright before God and man. If we believe, faith will keep us steady; if we repent, penitence will make us humble; if we pray, prayer will ensure us supplies; if we consecrate afresh all our energies to the Lord, consecration will preserve us from a worldly spirit; and if we are watchful, we shall escape many temptations and snares which overtake and overcome the heedless and unwary.

Beloved, may this year bring you much grace from God; may you live and walk in close and holy fellowship with God; may you be entirely devoted, and bring great glory, to God; and if death should overtake you, may an abundant entrance be administered unto you into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. And may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, *that you may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost (Rom. xv. 13).*



AN APOSTOLIC REQUIREMENT.

“Ye ought to be teachers.”—HEB. v. 12.

MANY persons are not what they ought to be, either in state, qualifications, or practice. Some deny this, and, therefore, we cannot expect them to improve; others admit it, but they make no effort to alter it, and consequently, are none the better for the admission. Truth is to spread through human instrumentality; and by the spread of truth, Christ is to be made known, sinners converted, and God glorified. For the spread of truth, teachers are required; and the church of God is to furnish the required instructors. In many quarters we hear the complaint that teachers are wanted; and in many congregations we see professors sitting idle who “*ought to be teachers.*” Let us, therefore, look very seriously at this declaration of the apostle.

Some of you ought *to be qualified to teach* who are not. You have long *professed* Christ. You have had plenty of *means* at hand. You have had time to

spare for other pursuits. Others, with no more means, with no more time, are qualified, and why should not you be? Are you so very dull? Is it so very difficult for you to acquire knowledge, or to acquire the ability to communicate what you know? Or, rather, is it not the love of ease, the indulgence of the flesh, and the prevalence of a selfish disposition that has prevented you? You ought to be teachers, because you might have been qualified to teach. *Why are you not?* Let conscience answer this question as before God, and in the light of eternity.

You ought *to be willing to teach*. Many have the ability, but they have not the will;—they are educated;—they profess Christ;—they are members of the church;—they are respectable in society;—they have a good degree of influence;—but they are not teachers. Why? Ah! why? The Lord Jesus has commissioned his church *to go and teach the nations*. The commission is to the whole church, and applies to every member, according to his station, talent, and ability. *Every Christian should teach*. You are entrusted with *the truth* to *preserve it*, to *spread it*, to *practise it*, and to *enjoy it*. You ought to teach it, why

254 *An Apostolic Requirement.*

do you not? Just because you want the will. There are persons ignorant of the truth to whom you could communicate it. They cannot be sanctified or saved without it. If they live and die ignorant of it, *are you guiltless? Can you be guiltless?* You ought to be a teacher. By your daily conduct, by your general conversation, by your special efforts, you ought to teach. And you ought to hold yourself responsible, up to a certain point, for the ignorance that is in the world. Does not the apostle teach this, when he says, "*Some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame*" (1 Cor. xv. 34)?

You ought to *be anxious to teach*. Not perhaps in the pulpit; you may not be qualified for that. Not to teach your pastor or the aged members; ten to one if you have any fitness for that. But to teach the young, the ignorant in your own neighbourhood, and in the villages near where you reside. You should never see a person ignorant of the truth, if it is at all probable that you can instruct him, or if it is consistent to endeavour to gain access to him, but you should be anxious to teach him. *How can you be a Christian, and not be anxious to make known the Saviour?*

How can you be a consistent member of the church, and not be anxious to add to its numbers? How can you be a patriot, and not be anxious to instruct your fellow-countrymen in the things which belong to their peace? How can you *observe the law*, which says, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," and not be anxious to lead your neighbour in the good and the right way? How can you *obey the gospel*, which says, "Compel them to come in, that my house may be filled," "preach the gospel to every creature," if you are not anxious, by teaching, to bring every soul under its influence? If you are not anxious to teach, there is something radically wrong; and if you are anxious to teach, you will seek qualifications, grace, and opportunity to do so.

You ought to be employed in teaching. There need not be a child in Great Britain uneducated, or a person left without an acquaintance with the gospel, if the members of the church of Christ would only do their duty. We ought seriously to think of this; and *I am sure*, that the more seriously we think of it, and the more closely we examine it, the more thoroughly shall we be convinced of its truth. Why

256 *An Apostolic Requirement.*

are children left in ignorance, or handed over to the teaching of Puseyites and Papists, or persons ignorant of the gospel? Just because those who ought to be teachers are not. Why are our villages in darkness, and thousands in our crowded towns strangers to the gospel? Because the members of the church of Christ love ease, indulge the flesh, and many of them are *too respectable*, that is, *too carnal*, to be teachers. From every pulpit, from every religious periodical, the sound should be heard, addressed to every professor of religion, "*ye ought to be teachers*," until the drowsy are awakened, and the flesh-loving professor is made ashamed of his course. Beloved, your Saviour speaks to *you*,—he speaks in the accents of aggrieved love,—he speaks from the throne of his glory. He says, "*I would thou wert either hot or cold.*" He tells thee, "*It is high time to awake out of sleep.*" You ought to be teachers, and you ought to be teaching. Souls are perishing. Error is spreading. Popery is working. Satan is deceiving the nations. Hell is filling. Earth and hell seem to be moved and stirred to their very depths, and shall "*we sit still?*" In vain do you cry out against

error, if you do not teach the truth. In vain do you protest against the aggressions of the Pope, if you do not spread the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. In vain do you complain of crime, ignorance, or cruelty, if you are not teachers, and if you are not teaching. Teach, then, "every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord" (Heb. vii. 2).

Teachers are wanted in many of our Sunday-schools, and you *could* teach, but *will not*. What shall we say to you? Rather, what will your Lord say? Teachers are wanted in many of our villages, and, perhaps, you could speak of Jesus acceptably, if you would try, but you will not, and what shall we say? Teachers are wanted in the cottages, cellars, garrets, and other residences, in the courts, lanes, alleys, and streets of our towns, and you could gain access to them, and set Christ before them, if you would, but you will not, and what shall we say? Shall we not say that you are verily guilty concerning your brothers. They are bone of your bone,—they are flesh of your flesh,—they inhabit the same place,—they speak the same language,—they need the same Saviour,—they

are travelling to the same dread eternity,—they must, with you, appear before the same awful judgment-seat,—they are in gross ignorance,—they are labouring under a fearful delusion,—they sit in darkness and in the shadow of death: you could visit them,—you could carry the light of the gospel to them,—you might be the means of snatching them as brands from the everlasting burnings, and be instrumental in their everlasting salvation, but you will not. Where is your hatred to sin? Where is your love for souls? Where is your zeal for Christ? Where is your opposition to Satan? Ah, where!

“You ought to be teachers.” You have been long enough in the church,—you know more than thousands around you; many would willingly be taught by you; God, in his word, commands you; and the Holy Spirit would work by you. Awake, then, and arise, and go to work in right earnest. Infidels are in earnest spreading infidelity. Jesuits are in earnest spreading Popery. Puseyites are in earnest spreading Puseyism. The devil is in earnest ruining immortal souls. All appear in *earnest* but the church of Christ. All are *active* but those who should be. Let us,

brethren, cast away the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts. Let us begin to work for God as we never began before. Let us go right up to the cross, and there entirely and for ever consecrate ourselves to God. Let us draw near to the throne, and seek special grace from God for special service in the cause of God. Let us begin teaching in every way, up to the extent of our power, saying, by our conduct, if any perish in ignorance, it shall not be my fault. Let tracts be circulated by thousands; but let not the tract be a substitute for the living voice; but let the tongue, the hand, the pen, the press, the purse, the head, the heart,—let all work, and all work together, and then, when our sincerity, perseverance, and purity of motive, have been tried, great and glorious results will follow. Churches of Jesus, awake, arise, and teach! Believers in the Son of God, go forth, everywhere preaching the word! Trust alone in the sacrifice of Jesus, exercise confidence in God, invoke the assistance of the Holy Spirit, and yet work as if all depended on your working, and a glorious revival will soon be realised and enjoyed.



SAUL'S QUESTION IMPROVED.

"What have we?"—1 SAM. XX. 1.

THUS inquired Saul, when about to present himself before Samuel, to whom it was customary to make himself present; and thus ought we to inquire, when we are about to appear before God's judgment seat. We are summoned, and we must obey. The warrant is ready; and nothing is wanting, but for the date of the summons when we must appear to be affixed. It may be done at any moment, and then, however short the notice, the messenger sent will insist upon our going to him. We cannot hide from him, we cannot effectually resist him. The surgeon and the physician may try, the prayer the godly may try, but the warrant is dated, all is over, we must "appear before the judgment seat of Christ." But shall we appear? What will be the result of our appearing? "*What have we?*"

Have we a righteousness which will answer all the claims of God's holy law? If not, what shall we do? God is ex-

just. He will by no means clear, or acquit, the guilty. If any one sin is chargeable upon us, he will not acquit us. He cannot consistently with his own word. One sin will sink us to the depths of hell. We must be righteous, or we shall be condemned. We must present to divine justice all that the law requires, or we are eternally undone. Have we, then, such a righteousness? If so, how did we come by it? We could not produce it, for our hearts are both wicked and weak. Whatever comes from the heart answers to the nature of the heart from which it comes. Now, our hearts are deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. Who, then, can bring a perfect righteousness out of such a polluted heart? Not one. Not one of our works by nature is good, much less every one of our works. But it takes the motives, thoughts, purposes, plans, words, and actions of a whole life, to make up a righteousness. Now, unless every motive that has influenced us, every thought that has been conceived by us, every purpose and plan that we have formed, every word we have spoken, and every action that we have performed, has been perfectly *holy, spotless as the driven snow*, we have

not the righteousness which God requires, and without which God cannot justify us. How, then, can man be just before God? How can we be acquitted before God's bar? Is there a possibility of this? Yes, there is. God has devised a way, and the gospel reveals it. A way in which he can be just, and yet the justifier of any sinner who believes in Jesus. We could not produce the righteousness required, but Jesus could and has done so. His *obedience unto death* was in the sinner's stead. His righteousness was wrought as the sinner's substitute, and it was accepted by the Judge of all. It is now called the "righteousness of God," "the gift of righteousness," "the righteousness which is by faith." The gospel presents it to us, and faith receives and appropriates it. It is placed to the account of every one that believeth. Have you this righteousness? You cannot be justified *without it*, you cannot be condemned *with it*. "He was made sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Cor. v. 21). "*What have we?*"

Have we a holy nature? We cannot enter heaven without this; and if we could, we should never enjoy it. Sin is a disease

as well as a crime. We must not only be pardoned, but healed. We must be sanctified, as well as justified. Those two blessings are never separated. Nor can they be, for the one would be useless without the other. If justified, we should be incapable of enjoying spiritual things; just as the sick man, confined to his bed by disease, is incapable of enjoying natural things. If sanctified, we should have no title to life, or to heavenly enjoyments; but should be like the healthy man, who stands charged with many crimes, and is consequently confined in a prison, and loaded with irons. We must be born again by the power of the Holy Spirit. The heart must be turned against sin. The soul must be restored to God's image. Holiness must become our element, our delight, and our health. We must have a new nature, a new heart, a new disposition; for without this, we have no real religion. We have nothing that will satisfy God's justice, except we have a perfect righteousness; and we have nothing that will please God's holiness, unless we are washed and sanctified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. God mercifully saves us, but it is *by the washing of regeneration, and renew-*

Saul's Question Improved.

ing of the Holy Ghost. "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord;" that is, with comfort and peace. "Blessed are *the pure in heart*, for *they* shall see God." Have we holiness? Do we hate sin? Mourn over sin? Watch against sin? Humbly confess sin? Loathe ourselves on account of sin? And feel at times as if we could not bear, or have patience with ourselves, on account of sin? Do we pray for holiness daily, heartily, in downright earnest? If so, the Spirit of God, as the spirit of holiness, dwells in us. If we have the righteousness of Jesus upon us, and the Spirit of holiness within us, then we may go before God with as little fear as Saul appeared before Samuel; and he will inform us of a kingdom, and confer on us a crown, far superior to that which Saul possessed, or Samuel made known.

"Come quickly, Lord, the veil remove!
 Pass as a God of pardoning love
 Before my ravish'd eyes:
 And when I in thy person see
 Jehovah's glorious majesty,
 I find my Paradise."



DAVID'S QUESTION IMPROVED.

"What have I done?"—1 SAM. XX. 1.

DAVID sought David's life. David was alarmed and concerned for his safety. Conscious of his innocence, he appeals to Jonathan, and asks the king's son, "What have I done?" In David's case there was good reason for this; but there is a class of sinners who, when the threatenings of God are set before them, when they are told that their present course will terminate in hell, with a good deal of self-sufficiency, ask, "What have I done? What that is so very bad? What that can provoke a good and gracious God? What that can deserve so dreadful a doom? HELL! ETERNAL TORMENTS! ME BE SENT TO HELL! What, one who has lived a moral life,—one who has been strictly honest,—one who has attended his place of worship regularly,—one who has said his prayers with a good deal of punctuality—*me go to hell!* Who, then, can go to heaven? *What have I done?*

266 *David's Question Improved.*

You have done the very worst thing that you could do! You have sinned against God. You have broken His holy law. That law requires you to be holy—perfectly holy. It requires that you should aim at your Creator's glory in everything you do. That self should never be your end in any one thing. That your motives, thoughts, purposes, plans, words, and actions, should be all for God's honour. There must be no lust, covetousness, wrath, envy, evil speaking, or irregularity of feeling, desire, or conduct. All must be by rule, and flow spontaneously from nature, or there is sin. Man was created capable of this, and God still requires it at our hands. If the law is violated, God is insulted, punishment is merited, and the sinner is doomed to misery and despair. Thus the law teaches us what God requires, demands exact conformity to its precepts, and threatens with eternal death all who break any of its commands. This is all that the law can do. You are under the law by nature, and as you cannot pretend to absolute perfection, all that the law can do for you is to condemn, and leave you in *despair*. You, have, therefore, done the *worst thing* that you could do, and are in

the worst position that you can be out of hell.

But, perhaps, in addition to this, you have rejected God's message of mercy sent to you in the everlasting gospel. The gospel comes to you as a sinner. It comes to you direct from the heart of God. It comes to you in a state of condemnation. It comes to tell you that there is mercy in God's heart. That he finds no pleasure in punishing sinners. That he has devised a way by which sinners may be saved. A way in which the law will get all its due, and the law-breakers be delivered from its tremendous sentence. It comes to tell you that God has given his own, his only Son, to be a substitute and sacrifice for sinners. That he has lived to obey the precepts of the law, and died to pay its awful penalty. That he is both able and willing to save all that come unto God by him. That he simply requires you to believe his message, trust in his atonement, confess your crimes, and consecrate yourself to his service. In so doing, he pledges his word and honour to save you. To deliver you from hell with all its horrors, from sin with all its consequences, and to reconcile you to his Father, entitle you to heaven.

•

268 *David's Question Improved.*

and prepare you to shine among the ranks of the blessed ones above.

Now, have you received this gospel into your heart? Have you believed it? Have you acted upon it? Do you renounce all other ground of dependance but Jesus and his precious blood? Do you venture your soul upon this sacrifice alone? Are you heartily sorry for your sins? Do you confess them before God with grief? Do you break off from your old habits, associates, and courses, and consecrate yourself to the service and honour of Jesus? If not, it is in vain for you to ask, "What have I done?" or, "Why should I go to hell?" Why, you have not only broken God's law, but you have refused a pardon from his grace! God has sent you a pardon, which was procured at no less a cost than the labour, sufferings, and death of his dear Son, and you have refused it. You did not believe the message. You would not accept the blessing. God told you that you must believe in Jesus; live upon Jesus; be made like Jesus, or be damned. But you would not believe Him, for you have encouraged a hope of going to heaven in direct opposition to God's plan, and thus you have made God a liar!

David's Question Improved. 269

(1 John v. 10.) You have said by your conduct, "I do not believe God. I shall not go to hell though I go on in my old course. I shall go to heaven, even though I am not born again by the Spirit of God. What have I done that I should not?" Oh, sinner, sinner, thy case is awful! Thy state is most dangerous. You are on the very brink of hell, and yet you do not believe it, The blue flames of the eternal pit almost flash in your face, and yet you cry peace. peace. The Lord arouse you from your fearful state.

"O Thou that dost in secret see,
Regard a dying sinner's prayer,
Out of the deep I cry to thee
Save, or I perish in despair.

Weeping to Thee I lift mine eyes,
Mine eyes which fail with looking up,
For Thee my heart laments and sighs,
Sick with desire and lingering hope.

O that I could but surely know
If I at last shall mercy find!
For what am I reserved below?
Tell me, thou Saviour of mankind!

Let others walk with thee in light,
But bless me with one parting ray,
And e'er I close mine eyes in night,
Give me to see thy perfect day."



PETER'S QUESTION IMPROVED.

"To whom shall we go?"—JOHN vi. 68.

WHAT do you want? If you want life, or peace, or holiness, or happiness, or eternal salvation, you are shut up to one, even to Jesus. It is of no use going to any one else. Hence Peter afterwards said, "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given amongst men whereby we must be saved" (Acts iv. 12). All depends on your going to Jesus. You may toil at the law, but by the deeds of the law shall no flesh living be justified. You may suffer in the flesh, but no sufferings of yours can satisfy divine justice, rescind the threatening of God's law, please the Most High, entitle you to a place in heaven, or make you meet for God's holy presence. No works, no sufferings of yours will do. There is no salvation by the priest, by the sacraments, by the Virgin, or by the church,—salvation is of the Lord.

"But if we are willing to go to Jesus, *how must we go?*" Just as you are.

Without any preparation. Without any price in your hand. Without any recommendation. Your sinfulness, your misery, your need of him, are recommendation enough. You need no other. He requires no other. Believe what is said of him in his holy word. Call upon him in your own simple language. Cast your soul into his hands. Place implicit confidence in his truthfulness. Expect salvation through what he has done and suffered *alone*. In so doing you are made for eternity. Salvation is yours. You are at peace with God. You are justified before God. The Most High is your Father, and if you were to die the next moment, heaven is your home. Whatever you want, go to Jesus for it, for he has it to bestow. Whatever you fear, go to Jesus with it, for he can deliver you from it. Going to Jesus for all, and with all, is living a life of faith upon the Son of God. You cannot go to him too often, or for too much. He loves to see you come. He rejoices to hear you ask. He waits to confer blessings upon you. Let not your sins discourage you. Let not Satan keep you away,—he will try his utmost to do it. But if discouraged, if tempted to keep away, ask, “*To whom shall I go?*” No one

272 *Peter's Question Improved.*

suits me but Jesus. No one can meet my case but Jesus. He says, "Come unto me." He solemnly assures me, that he will not cast me out. I will therefore go to him. I will call upon him. I will wait before him. I will hope to be saved by him. I will cry until he answers me. I will give him no rest, until he says unto my soul, "I am thy salvation." Thus acting you are sure to succeed. Salvation in your case is as certain as though you possessed and enjoyed it. Therefore fear not; he may delay to answer you for a time, but he will not refuse to confer the blessing upon you. Therefore the prophet said, "It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord." "The Lord is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him." Then "wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thy heart; wait, I say, on the Lord."

"Why then, ye careless sinners, thus
Will ye from Jesus rove?
'Tis time to turn from sinful ways
And taste that God is love."



THE JAILOR'S QUESTION IMPROVED.

"What must I do to be saved?"—ACTS xvi. 30.

ALL men by nature are asleep in sin. They manifest an awful indifference about the state of their souls. They go on in darkness. Therefore anything that arouses them, and leads them to think, is likely to be beneficial. The Jailor, I suppose, had heard of Christ. He may have heard Paul and Silas preach. But he was careless of his own soul, and cruel to those committed to his custody. Therefore he thrust Paul and Silas into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks. But the earthquake aroused him. The fear of his prisoners escaping filled him with fear. The Holy Spirit set his iniquities before him. He felt deep conviction of sin. He was concerned to escape, not merely from the wrath of men, but from the wrath of God. He saw his danger. He dreaded his doom. He looked out for a way of escape. He cried to his prisoners, who now appeared to him in a new light, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

No question can be more important. It is just the question that every one of us should propose. We *need* salvation. We *may* be saved. But *how*? What must we do? How can we escape our deserved doom? The answer given was most simple. No ceremonies were proposed. No human priest was exalted. No system or body called "the Church" was pointed out. No, it was simply, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." Receive into your mind the truth concerning Jesus. Give credit to the testimony of God. Place your confidence in the person and finished work of Christ. Commit your souls into his faithful hands. He will save you. No sin shall condemn you. No power shall destroy you. No fallen spirit shall rejoice over you. He will place his righteousness and bloodshedding to your account. His blood will be your atonement, and on the ground of that you will be pardoned. His obedience will be your righteousness, and on account of that you will be justified. His power will be your defence, and by that you will be protected. His wisdom will be your guide, and by that you will be conducted. *He will undertake to save you, and to present you faultless before the face of his Father,*

with exceeding joy. No penances, no pilgrimages, no prayers to the virgin, or the saints, will be required. He will save you himself, without any assistance. He will save you without money or price, or anything that will answer to, or may be represented by, such words. Commit the soul to Christ, exercise confidence in Christ, expect to be saved alone by Christ, and salvation is infallibly certain.

No duties, no observances, are required as pre-requisites to salvation. We must be saved by free grace first, and then perform duties, and attend to religious observances, in order that we may glorify God for his mercy to us. Faith is the first thing that God requires of us, and "without faith it is impossible to please him." No prayer we can offer, no tears we may shed, no duties we may perform, no ordinances we observe, can please God, until we believe in Jesus. Faith in Christ, or giving credit to the gospel, and relying on what Jesus did and suffered, should go before prayer, and every other religious exercise; nor can anything we do please him until we believe. This is the plain unvarnished declaration of God's most holy word. Faith, prayer, penitence, peace, purity, power, and obedience, is God's

THE JAILOR : *Quemadmodum*

1880. We must therefore look to Jesus first, and then we shall find every part of practical religion comparatively easy. The common mistake is that we must feel deep repentance, or a spirit of prayer, or love to the Saviour, or perform certain religious duties, and then exercise confidence in Christ. This is just reversing God's order, and this very thing keeps multitudes in bondage, doubt, fear, and distress. Believe and be saved,—be saved by believing, and then go to work ; realize salvation by simple faith in Christ, and then you will find liberty in prayer, power to repent, pleasure in duties, and fellowship with God in his own ordinances.

Reader, as a sinner, you are in as great danger as the Jailor was. Do you feel it? Have you been alarmed at it? Have you seriously and heartily inquired how you may be saved? Or, are you like he was before the earthquake aroused him? The way of salvation is most simple, if we take God's word for our directory. But if we listen to men, and neglect God's word, ten to one but we shall be misled, bewildered, and confused. Some will send you to the Church, some to the crucifix, some to baptism, some to the law, some to one thing,

and some to another; but the gospel sends you *directly to Christ*. Some will say repent,—some, pray,—some, do penance,—some, try to do your best, and expect Christ in mercy to do the rest; but the gospel says, “BELIEVE, *believe on the Lord Jesus Christ* ;” and without asking *who* you are, or *what* you are, assures you in most plain and positive terms, that “*you shall be saved*.” Do you doubt? Do you ask, “How may I know which is the right way?” Put the matter out of doubt by putting it to the proof. Do you ask, “How shall I go to Jesus?” Go as we have gone before you, saying,

“Not the labours of my hands
Can fulfil thy law's demands:
Could my zeal no respite know,
Could my tears for ever flow,
All for sin could not atone;
Thou must save, and Thou alone!

Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to thy cross I cling;
Naked, come to thee for dress;
Helpless, look to thee for grace;
Black, I to the fountain fly;
Wash me, Saviour, or I die!”





TWO QUESTIONS TO YOU.

"He is of age; ask him."—JOHN ix. 22.

CURIOSITY is fond of questioning. But the curious often go to the wrong quarter with their questions. It is often best to refer such persons to the parties about whom they are curious, especially when they are of age. We have two questions which we wish to put to some of our readers; and as they are of age, we shall not go to others, but come directly to themselves, and ask,—

1. *Are you happy?* If you say, No, then *why are you not happy?* God created us capable of enjoying happiness. He surrounded our first parents with everything necessary to make them happy. Sin spoiled all. A sinner, as such, cannot be happy. It is impossible. He is a criminal, and exposed to punishment. He is diseased, and the subject of pain. Still even a sinner may be made happy; because his crimes may be forgiven and his disease may be cured. There is not one person that reads these

lines, but may be happy ; and if each person is not happy, the cause is to be found in himself. It is not in your circumstances, for many have been happy circumstanced just as you are. Many are now happy, though surrounded by as many things to make them unhappy. Happiness stands in the favour and enjoyment of God. We must be reconciled to him, be pardoned by him, be accepted of him, and be satisfied with him, or we can never be happy. If God is our Father, if Jesus is our Saviour, if the Holy Spirit is our Comforter, we may, we ought to be happy. But if this is not the case, it may be ; it may be this very day. God calls you out of the world ; He bids you come to him in the name of Jesus ; He directs you to confess your sins ; and He promises to receive you, to pardon you, and to be a Father unto you. Jesus is willing and waiting to save you. Are you burdened and weary ? He says, " Come and I will give you rest." Are you thirsting for holiness, comfort, and peace ? He says, " Come unto me and drink." The Holy Spirit is promised to every one that asketh, and to you if you really desire him. If you are not happy, it is because you are not *really religious*.

2. *Why are you not religious?* Religion is union to God, the enjoyment of God, likeness to God, obeying the will of God, being likeminded with God. Can this be repulsive? Is this unpleasant? Is it beneath you? Does it not concern you? Is it unattainable by you? Have you sought to be religious, and have you sought it in God's way? Have you really made the attempt, and failed? If so, you are the first. But why are you not religious? Just inquire honestly and earnestly. Examine into the cause, and examine thoroughly. You will not find the cause in God. You will find it in yourself. You are not religious just because you do not wish to be; you are not willing to be so. If you were willing, you would seek it. If you sought it, you would find it. Thus saith the Lord, "*Every one that seeketh findeth.*" Now, it is impossible for God to lie. He cannot deceive us. If therefore you are not religious, it is because you have not sought religion: and if you have not sought religion, it is because you are not willing to be religious, or because you care nothing about it. You may be happy now; *you may be happy for ever, if you will.* *God has no pleasure in your death.* He

does not delight to punish his foes, but he does delight to show mercy unto them, and does so in every case where they seek it. Now, suppose,—though the Lord forbid it—but suppose you go to hell, and some one asks you there, “*Why are you damned?*” the only answer you will be able to give will be, “*Because I would not be saved.*” Or one asks you, “*Why did you come to this place of torment?*” your only reply, if you speak truth will be, “*Because I refused to go to heaven.*” Is not this awful? Will not such reflections in hell be unspeakably dreadful? And yet, though only one month of the present year is gone, there are some in hell on the first day of February who might have gone to heaven, if they had only been willing, on the first day of January. What a dreadful thought this is, and it is more dreadful to think that you may be there on the first day of March. Oh flee, flee, I beseech you, from the wrath to come! Flee, flee to Jesus, and happiness and heaven are your own!! Flee, flee this moment, for the next may be too late!!!



PROCRASTINATION.

"Go thy way for this time."—ACTS xxiv. 25.

PAUL was now before Felix. The mysterious providence of God had brought these two remarkable persons together ; the interview was a very solemn one ; it will never be forgotten ; it has done great good ; it will do more. Here are two great parties, they still exist ; for though Paul and Felix have long since been dead, the parties they represented still survive. They are in England. They will read these few lines. Let us look at them.

Here is the minister of Christ,—the servant of the Most High God. He is delivering his message. He is speaking for his divine Master. He is reasoning with one of his fellow-men. What is he aiming at ? What does he wish ? What is the desire of his soul ? Nothing less than the present and eternal salvation of his judge. He wanted to see Felix converted. To see him converted at that moment, before he left him. *He aimed at this. He longed for this. Reader, this is just what we want. When*

we preach the gospel we want to save souls, every soul that hears us. When we write and print these short pieces that you may read them, we aim at the salvation of your soul. Nothing less than this will satisfy us. We cannot consent that you should live in rebellion against God another hour. We cannot agree that you should remain unpardoned five minutes more. We want you to be saved, and to be saved at this moment. Oh, that you were as desirous of being saved, as we are desirous that you should be! Then you would yield your heart to God instantly. Then you would accept God's gracious invitation without delay. Then this would be the happiest, the most memorable day in your life. Then there would be extraordinary joy in heaven; for angels, those holy and benevolent beings who have watched you while in your course of sin and folly, would rejoice in the presence of God over your repentance. Then there would be new joy on earth as soon as it was known, for every believer who heard of it would glorify God on your behalf.

Here is Felix listening to the servant of Christ. He is attentive. He is interested. He is affected. He trembles. He realizes *something of the solemnity of eternity.* He

feels concern, but it is not deep enough, therefore he says, "*Go thy way for this time.*" He does not positively refuse, but he postpones the matter. He thought there would be a more convenient time, but there never was ; and Felix has had nearly eighteen hundred years to rue his folly in hell, he is regretting it at this moment, and he will regret it for ever. Many have imitated his conduct. Many are doing so now. They say to God's ministers, "*Go thy way for this time.*" That is, "I love sin. It is my element. It is my delight. I cannot give it up just now. The dance,—the glass,—the jovial party,—the customs of the present world,—these are things that I like. I am not prepared to part with them, and embrace the gospel you preach. '*Go thy way ;*' I had rather remain as I am, at least a little longer. I do not wish to be saved at present. By and bye, when I am too old to enjoy sin, or when sickness has made me too weak to follow any carnal pleasures, then, at this convenient season, I will send for thee."

Oh, sinner, sinner, and will you put from you God's gracious invitation, will you turn a deaf ear to the message of mercy, and thus judge, or pronounce yourself un-

worthy of everlasting life? Will you persevere in sin until you lie down in black despair? Will you go to hell close by the gates of heaven? Will you perish in your own deceivings? Have you no fear of God? Have you no dread of eternal torments? Have you no wish to escape from the wrath to come? What will you do in the day of visitation, when death arrests you, when Satan seizes you, when the just Judge passes sentence upon you, when hell moves itself to meet you at your coming, and when the gates of the infernal pit close upon you for ever? What *will* you do? What *can* you do? To *whom* will you flee for help? How *will* you, how *can* you, escape? Alas! escape then will be impossible! "Behold, *now* is the accepted time. Behold, *now* is the day of salvation." Then the door of hope will be shut. Then the way of escape will be closed. Then the Son of God will have risen up from the throne of grace, and prepared his throne for judgment. Say not then, "Go thy way for this time;" but rather say, "I will hear what God the Lord will speak; I will seek the Lord while he may be found; I will call upon him while he is near." Surrender the

citadel of thy heart at once. Receive Christ this moment. Look unto him and be saved instantly. There is redemption in his blood, even the forgiveness of sins. There is mercy with him that he may be feared. There is salvation of free and sovereign grace, and whosoever will may come and take it freely.

Reader, you will either receive or reject it; you will either embrace Christ, or say, "Go thy way for this time." Which will it be? Ah, which?

"Hasten, O sinner, *to be wise,*
And stay not for the morrow's sun;
The longer wisdom you despise,
The harder is she to be won.

O hasten *mercy to implore,*
And stay not for the morrow's sun,
For fear thy season should be o'er
Before this evening's stage be run.

O hasten, sinner, *to return,*
And stay not for the morrow's sun,
For fear thy lamp should fail to burn
Before the needful work is done.

O hasten sinner *to be blest,*
And stay not for the morrow's sun,
For fear the curse should thee arrest
Before the morrow is begun."



THE FIRST DAY OF THE FIRST MONTH.

WHAT a mercy that we have been spared until now. How many have been cut down during the last year. We might have begun this year in hell. Oh, if we had! How dreadful the thought! But many who began the last year as we begin this, are in hell now. They little thought that it would be so, but there they are, and now there is no redemption, there is no way of escape. They are shut up in hopeless despair. Their doom is for ever fixed. And why are we spared? To go on in sin? To abuse the mercy that has been shown to us? To aggravate our woe? Oh, no! We are spared that we may escape from the wrath to come, that we may secure the pardon of our sins, and that we may be happy both in this world and in that which is to come.

This is the first day of the first month, and what is our first *thought*? What shall we fix our thoughts upon? Let us *think of past mercies* and past sins; let us *think of present danger* and present duty;

let us think of future probabilities and certainties. Let us think of our state, what is it? Are we pardoned, or condemned? Are we children of wrath or sons of God? Are we reconciled to God, or living at enmity with God? Do we ever *speak* to him in prayer, *look* to him in faith, *walk* with him in love, *work* for him with pleasure, or *long* to be with him in glory? We cannot be in friendship with God if we do not.

What is our first *desire* to-day? Is it to be made holy, to be conformed to the image of Christ, and to be used to the glory of God? Do we desire grace from God to make us like God? Do we desire to possess unquestionable evidence that we are born of God, that we are accepted of God, that we are approved of God? Do we desire to please God, and to please him well in all things? Are our desires ascending to heaven, or are they confined to the present world? The desires show the state of the heart; if they are carnal, so is the heart; if they are spiritual, so is the heart.

What shall be our first *prayer*? Shall we pray for a special blessing, asking it of God as a new year's gift? If so, what

The First Day of the First Month. 289

shall we ask for? Reader, think, what would you wish God to give you to begin this year with? Let us ask for faith, that we may believe his word; for repentance, that we may be sorry for our sins; for love, that we may cleave to Jesus; for zeal, that we may work in God's cause; and for thorough consecration to God, that there may be no mistake about our character or destination.

What shall be our first *effort*? Shall it be to secure our own salvation, and enjoy the knowledge of it in our own souls; thus securing all temporal good, and escaping all spiritual evil? Let us hear and attend to the admonition of the Saviour, "Seek ye *first* the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these (temporal good things) shall be added unto you." Let us regard the Saviour's direction, "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you." A kingdom may be won, shall we win it? Bread for the soul may be obtained, shall we obtain it?

What shall be our first *aim*? On what shall we fix the eye, the heart, at the *beginning of this year*? Shall it be on something

290 *The First Day of the First Month.*

temporal or on spiritual blessings? Shall we aim to be great, or to be good? To gratify self, or honour God? To live like the beasts that perish, or as immortal, intelligent, and accountable creatures? Dear friends, let us aim high. Let us aim to be all that God is willing to make us, to obtain all that God has promised to give us, and to enjoy all that God has engaged to confer on those that seek him. Let us aim in all we do to get near to God, to be made like Jesus, to prepare for eternal glory, and to make all about us as happy as we can.

Remember, this may be our last year. The sentence may have gone forth, "*This year thou shall die.*" Let us therefore be ready. Let us *make sure* that we are in Christ, that we are God's workmanship created anew in Christ Jesus, that Christ is in us the hope of glory, that our bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost, and that we are made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.

"His trials and sorrows the Christian prepare
For the rest that remaineth above;
On earth tribulation awaits him, but there
The smile of unchangeable love."



THE PRAYER OF FAITH.

"All things, whatsoever ye ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive."—MATT. xxi. 22.

SOME have supposed that this promise is to be confined to miracles, but this is a mistake. It is as much intended for us as it was for the first disciples. Look at the parallel passage in Mark xi. 22-26. Jesus directs his disciples to exercise "faith in God," assures them that the prayer of faith shall be answered; and requires them to exercise a forgiving spirit, as they would hope to be forgiven; which is as much binding on us as on them. He says, "Whatsoever things ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them. And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses." Look also at Luke xi. 5-13. He delivers a parable to show the power of importunate prayer, and then says, "Ask, and it shall be

given you ; seek, and ye shall find ; knock, and it shall be opened," &c. Here he positively promises that every one that heartily asks, honestly seeks, and importunately knocks, shall be attended to ; but faith is supposed, and is necessary to such asking, seeking, and knocking. Once more, look at James i. 5-7. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything from the Lord." Here you see faith is required, and without faith we are told not to expect an answer to our prayer. What the Lord may please to do in his sovereignty over and above what he has promised, is one thing ; and what his word warrants us to expect, is another and very different thing. God will never be worse than his word ; but he may do more than he has promised.

The prayer of faith supposes that the person praying is a believer, that he believes that God is, and is a rewarder of them that *diligently seek him*. That he is united to *Christ*, and abides in fellowship with Christ,

as it is written, "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you" (John xv. 7). Also, that his heart is set against all sin; for if one sin is indulged, if one idol is spared, God is dishonoured and provoked to jealousy; and it is not to be expected that he will indulge those who violate his commands and encourage his foes. Hence the Psalmist, in so many words, says, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me" (Psalm lxvi. 18). But if we believe in God as revealed in Jesus,—if we are united to Christ and abide in communion with him,—if our hearts are weaned from, and set against all sin, we are prepared to pray in faith.

In order to exercise faith in prayer, we must only pray for what we really want. God has promised to supply our necessities, but not to gratify our fancies. If we *want* what we ask of God, we shall not talk before him, or offer compliments to him, but we shall heartily plead with him. Or we must heartily desire the blessings which we seek, for desire is the soul of prayer, and to the desire the promise is made, as you read (Ps. cxlv. 19),—"He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him; he also will hear

their cry, and will save them." Much is said in prayer to God, which is anything but pleading with God, or the utterance of heartfelt desire to God. "But the desire of the righteous shall be granted." We must only pray for what God has promised. I cannot consistently believe that God will give me anything, except he has promised in his word to do so. If, therefore, I desire anything for myself, my family, the church, my country, or the world, I must first ask, Is there any particular promise in which God has said that he will give it? If there is not, then, Is the blessing I desire included in any of the more general promises? Again, Does the promise refer to any particular circumstance? If so, are the circumstances present? Or is it made to the exercise of any particular grace, or peculiar state of mind? If so, have I that grace in exercise, or is my mind in the state required? Attention to these particulars will prevent many mistakes, and painful disappointments. For instance, I pray for some blessing, but I have enmity in my heart against some one; or there is a disagreement between me and a fellow-christian, and I refuse to go and seek to be reconciled to my brother; now, God will not hear me; I thought if I

prayed loud and long he would; he does not; I am grieved, irritated, and disappointed. But I ought not to be, for God has said, "First be reconciled to thy brother, and then come" (Matt. v. 24); this I have neglected; in so doing, I have regarded "iniquity in my heart," and under such circumstances God could not hear my prayer.

If we would have faith in prayer, we must, when praying, realize God as present with us, and listening to us. It is often the case that we seem to be praying in an empty room, or to a being at a great distance from us. This is wrong. We address a present God. One who stands before us in all his glorious perfections, and who is waiting to receive our petitions and bless our souls. The heart is never right in prayer, except we realize that we are alone with God, or, that God is attending to us as if he had nothing else to attend to. We must solemnly prostrate ourselves before God, not so much the body as the soul. Thus did Abraham, though he was emphatically God's friend, —though God stood before him in a human form,—yet he prostrated all his powers before God, and was filled with solemn awe; hence he says, "Oh let not the Lord be

The Prayer of Faith.

will speak." "Behold now, I
upon me to speak unto the Lord,
ut dust and ashes," &c. (Gen.

When faith is strongest, our
efore God will be deepest; and
ged most, we shall lie lowest.
o steadily rely, for the accept-
persons and prayers, on the
Christ. There is no coming
acceptably but in the name of
will true faith ever venture into
ice but with the blood of atone-
and. If we realize God's pre-
rate our souls before God's
test heartily on Christ's finished
y pray in faith.

ing intended by our Lord, is
a God. We go to him confident
'good, ready to forgive, and
mercy unto all them that call
Ps. lxxxvi. 5). We feel certain
d is true, that he means what
in his promises, that he is in the
now as he was when he made
t having promised to give good
em that ask him out of pure
ify his own rich grace, and to
r to his own name and charac-
not now forfeit his word, or re-

fuse our petitions. We are, therefore, inwardly and powerfully persuaded that he will give us what we ask, because he is so good, and has promised to do so in his word. Thus we give credit to his word, rely on his veracity, and place confidence in his faithfulness. We ask in faith. We believe God will give. We have the witness in ourselves, that God will hear and answer us: for our "faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen;" or "the confident expectation of things hoped for, the perfect persuasion of things not seen."

This faith always keeps God's glory in view, attending to the apostolic admonition, "Whether, therefore, ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." The first inquiry, therefore, of a person under the influence of this principle is, when prompted to ask anything in prayer, "Will this honour God? Will it bring glory to his holy name? Will it further his blessed cause? Will it deepen my sanctification?" And if it is clearly seen that it will do so, then the man goes and confidently asks for it. True faith always consents that the flesh should be mortified. It will not spare the old man, but will put him off with his

deeds. It will have the flesh dragged to the cross, to which it nailed the Saviour, and have it put to shame and pain. It will bring down our pride, self-importance, worldliness, and love of ease; thus purifying the heart, and making us vessels "of honour, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use." It breathes universal benevolence. It harbours no unkind thoughts. It indulges no proud spirit. It feeds no bitter temper. But it loves tenderly and heartily all who love the Saviour; and pities, prays for, and strives to benefit all who are yet in their sins.

This faith will produce earnestness. We shall ask as if we really desired to possess. We shall plead for the blessing as if we could not do without it. The desire springing from the depths of the soul, will ascend and enter into the heart of God. It will make us importunate. We shall not only ask, but seek; not only seek, but knock; not only knock, but continue knocking until mercy's door is thrown wide open. Like the woman of Canaan, we shall pray, plead, and persevere until our Lord says, "Be it unto thee even as thou wilt." Like the man that went to his friend at midnight, who would take nothing for an answer but

the loaves for which he went, we shall agonize until we prevail. Like the woman who went to seek relief from the unjust judge, we shall go, and remain until we obtain what we seek. God's elect cry day and night unto him, until he arise and have mercy upon him. This faith will awaken expectation. We shall wait, watch, and expect that the Lord will do as he has said, give as he has promised, and answer prayer according to his word. Earnest, importunate pleaders with God, always expect to be answered, and they are never disappointed.

Faith honours God, for it commits the soul to him, and seeks every blessing from him. It leaves the time when, the place where, and the means by which, the answer shall be given to the Lord. It never dictates to infinite wisdom, complains of infinite love, or doubts the faithfulness of the Most High. It leaves everything for him, or holds everything loosely, ready to surrender it as his command; and when all is gone for Christ and his cause, it rises like the lark from its torn nest and sings, "Doubtless I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered *the loss of all things*, and do count them

ing thing, that I may win Christ, and be found in him" Phil. iii. 9.

God honours **FAITH**, by conferring much upon it. Indeed he never says it **NAV**. The Saviour has put a **NAIK** into the hand of faith signed with his own name; he says, "Phil. iii. 9, ask for what you please, and go to my Father for it, and I give you my word that he will bestow it." "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you" (John xvi. 23). Yea, he engages to give it himself, that his father may be honoured by his so doing; hence we read, "I go unto my Father, and whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son" (John xiv. 12, 13). God ascribes much to faith. Yea, he ascribes more to faith, than to any exercise of the human mind, any work wrought by any of his creatures, or any other grace of his Holy Spirit. It is faith that has power with God and prevails. Faith opens heaven, unlocks God's treasury, presents God's promises for payment, and brings numerous, invaluable, and everlasting blessings unto our possession. Lord, increase our faith! Holy Spirit, *help us* to pray in faith; and may it be said *of us*, as it was of Abraham, "He stag-

red not at the promise of God through belief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; being fully persuaded that what he had promised, he was able also to perform" (Rom. iv. 20, 21).

"Wherewith shall we approach the Lord,
And bow before his throne?
By trusting in his faithful word,
And pleading Christ alone.

The blood, the righteousness, and love
Of Jesus will we plead;
He lives within the veil above,
For us to intercede!

Sure ground, and sure foundation too,
We find in Jesu's name;
Herein we every blessing view,
And every favour claim.

Then let his name for ever be
To us supremely dear;
Our only all-prevailing plea,
For all our hope is there.

This is the name the Father loves
To hear his children plead;
And all such pleading he approves,
And blesses them indeed."





FAMILY PRAYER.

"Praying with all prayer."—Eph. vi. 18.

As there are different kinds of prayer—private, public, social, and domestic—the Christian is exhorted to pray always with all prayer. Whatever leads us to God does us good, and the seasons when we approach him are our best seasons. Pray we *must*, if we are born of God, for prayer is then the breath of the soul; and pray we should, alone, or with others, as opportunity may offer. We cannot go to God too often, or be with God too much. We have many wants, and prayer will obtain a supply for them. We have many temptations, and prayer will prove a preservative against them. Are we private individuals? We should pray as such. Are we public characters? We should pray as such. Are we at the head of a family? We should pray in that situation. Let us reflect for a few minutes upon family prayer.

It is necessary, for we should acknowledge God in our social relations, we should

say by our conduct, without fear or shame, "I am the Lord's." It is included in bringing up our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Our children and servants should hear us pray. The daily, devout, and scriptural prayers of the head of a family are the best lessons that can be given on prayer. It is beautiful, for what sight is more lovely than to see the master of the family with all his domestics around him, first reading God's word to them, and then praying for God's blessing upon them. They all hear the same truth, bow before the same throne, and are led to the same good and gracious God. Oh, it is a lovely sight! It is *beneficial*, it is the means which God often employs to produce salutary impressions, which issue in a sound conversion. Many have had to bless the day they ever went into a praying family. Then it often prevents disagreements, and works out a reconciliation where parties have disagreed. It is also God's ordinance, through which he sends down innumerable blessings upon them. God is specially present when a family meets for prayer,—he receives the confessions, listens to the complaints, pardons the sins, grants the *requests* and imparts his blessing to the

favoured group. A family without prayer is a family exposed to ten thousand dangers. A house without an altar is only imperfectly furnished. To profess Christ and have no family prayer, is beneath the poor heathens who have, and worship, their worthless household gods.

Prayer in the family should be *short*; long prayers are never acceptable in the presence of others, but they are very injurious in families where there are children or unconverted servants. Prayer in the family should be *simple*; it should be a simple confession of sin, acknowledgment of mercies, application for blessings, and pleading for pardon. The less of art and the more of nature in family prayer the better. Prayer in the family should be *spiritual*; with too many it is a mere form. The party conducting it does not live near to God, so as to imbibe the Spirit of God, and, therefore, cannot pour out spiritual thoughts, desires, hopes, thanksgivings, and intercessions to God. We shall be pretty much in the family what we are in the closet: if familiar with God when alone, we shall be spiritual when we pray before others. Prayer in the family should be varied, sameness always tires; and with so many

wants to be supplied, so many mercies to be acknowledged, so many parties to be remembered, so many promises to plead, there can be no reason why there should be a tiresome sameness. Variety generally interests, engages, and pleases, therefore aim at variety in family prayer. Prayer in the family should be *regular*; some have family prayer only on Lord's-days, and some only on particular occasions. Supper parties appear to be the invention of Satan to set aside family prayer, and do mischief in the families of professors, and his scheme too frequently succeeds. He that wishes to bring up his family for God, or to set an example which is likely to make a salutary impression on his domestics, should avoid all parties or meetings which are prolonged to a late hour. They *have* done, and in some places *are* doing incalculable mischief.

Many professors have no family prayer; reader, have you? If not, what is the reason? Do you plead the want of gifts? Allow me to ask you, have you ever made the trial? Have you ever sought the gift from God? Many persons who can talk *very fluently* before their families upon *matters of business, or politics, or other subjects*

of conversation, pretend that they cannot pray with their families. They can talk to them, or to others about them, but they cannot go upon their knees and talk to God for them. There is something radically wrong here, and it is to be feared that it lies in the state of the heart, and not in the lack of talent. The gift of prayer, like every other gift, grows by a judicious use of it. Those who have found great difficulty in commencing family prayer, have soon found the difficulty vanish by use. The devil hates family prayer, and will do all he can to keep us from it, or to make us weary of it. Many who have family prayer may almost as well have none. They drive it off to such a late hour, that all are thoroughly tired out and cannot enjoy it. Or, they read over a lifeless, tiresome, barren form. Or, they pray in such a dull, monotonous, formal manner, that no one feels an interest, or derives any benefit from it. Or, they act so inconsistently in the business, or the family, when they are off their knees, that their domestics do not believe what they say when they are on. The actions of the day and the devotions of the evening should agree. A man is really what he is regularly. A spiritual man will be spiritual

in all places ; and a devout man will always be more or less devotional. Lively, devoted and zealous Christians always approve of and practise family prayer. They could not be happy without. They enjoy it, and, generally speaking, their domestics enjoy it with them. They exercise their judgment, and adapt their devotions to times, persons, and circumstances. They throw their hearts into their prayers. Their affections are engaged and show themselves. They manifest that they know God, are in friendship with him, and feel at home in his presence. Reader, is there an altar in your house ? Do you collect your household regularly around it ? Do you aim so to conduct family prayer, as to make a good, a pleasing, a profitable impression ? Is there incense on your altar *twice* in the day, or only once,—every day, or only occasionally ? Is there a sweet perfume of devotion, grateful alike to spiritual persons and to God ? Beloved, family prayer will never be what it ought to be until we live nearer to God. When our fellowship with God is close, intimate, and filial, then all our mercies, whether in the sanctuary, the sick room, or the family, will be *savoury, salutary, and impressive*. There will be a power, a sweetness, and a spiri-

tuality about them, which must be realized to be known, and even then cannot be described. Alas! we are so worldly, so carnal, so cold, that the difference between us and the world is very slight. Oh, that God would pour down his Holy Spirit upon us, and fill us with love, zeal, and power; that so we may worship him in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. Lord Jesus, send the blessed Comforter into our hearts and homes, that we may reflect thy praise, and that our families may be consecrated to thy service! Holy Spirit, come and preside in our households, bring every member into union with Christ, and enable us to preside over them to the glory of the Most High! Gracious God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we worship thee, and desire that all that are under our influence may be the temples of God, the epistles of Christ, the habitation of the Comforter; take, oh, take them, and consecrate them to thyself for ever!

“When soon or late we reach the coast
O'er life's rough ocean driven,
May we be found, no wanderer lost,
A family in heaven.”



AN EXAMPLE TO DEACONS.

WHEN Deacon Barker, of Newport, was on his death-bed, and his pastor went to see him, he said, "*Pastor, I never heard you preach a sermon, but I always prayed God to bless and help you.*"

Deacons, here is an example for you. Whenever you see your pastor ascend the pulpit, whenever you see him rise to speak in the Lord's name, lift up your hearts to God for his blessing. Two such deacons would be to a pastor what Aaron and Hur was to Moses when Israel were engaged with Amalek in the valley, and similar results may be expected. Alas! there are deacons who, when the preacher rises to address his people, instead of lifting up the heart to God for his blessing, are adjusting the scales of orthodoxy to weigh every statement, in order to ascertain if there are sixteen ounces to the pound. There are others who sit criticizing the style and action of the preacher, and who are only pleased with fine-turned periods and graceful gestures. Some even sit down to indulge in prejudice, and seek for occasion to

take offence. But we have many deacons who hear with charity, and plead with God for the pastor while delivering his message. But we want more such. Indeed we want none but such. For those who always pray for the pastor, will work with him, and be a blessing to him. The spirit of prayer will awaken and keep alive holy sympathy, will unite heart to heart, will keep down improper tempers, and will stimulate to do anything and everything that will further the cause of God, promote the unity of the church, and bring sinners to repentance. There can be no question but Deacon Barker was a peaceful man, regular and early in his attendance upon the means of grace, highly esteemed by the church, and tenderly beloved by his pastor. Oh, that we had many like Deacon Barker! For a good deacon is one of the church's choicest blessings; while a prayerless, proud, unfeeling, lordly, worldly-minded deacon is one of its greatest curses. How many pastors are pining and moaning for want of suitable deacons to encourage and assist them. How many have left their flocks, where they were useful, and would have been happy, if they had only been privileged to have scriptural deacons.

Members of the church of Christ, be

careful whom you choose to fill this important office, for you had better have no deacons than inconsistent ones. Let not your choice be influenced by wealth or station in life, but by holiness, interest in the cause of God, and thorough consecration to God's glory. Deacons of the church of Christ, often read over the scriptural account of the qualifications required in you, and pray the Lord to bestow them upon you. Imitate Deacon Barker; set the example of early and regular attendance on the means of grace; never let your pastor stand up to preach without lifting up your heart to God for his blessing on the sermon; hear devotionally, not critically; and endeavour to cheer his mind under depression, and encourage him when he is cast down. Your pastor is sure to be very much influenced by you, either for good or evil. You *must* be a blessing or a curse to him. You *will* either help or hinder him. A great weight of responsibility rests upon you, do not lose sight of it, or endeavour to cast it off, but deaconise in the prospect of eternity, as those who must give an account. In pecuniary affairs be punctual, straightforward, and scrupulously honest. Collect monies, keep your

accounts, and make your payments, as immediately under the eye of God. Never let the pastor have to wait for his salary, because you have neglected to call upon the people for their subscriptions. Never let the pastor go short, because you fail to remind members of their duty. Treat your pastor in all things as the servant of God, the minister of Jesus Christ, as one placed over you by the Holy Ghost. Never forget that you must *face him* before the judgment-seat of Christ;—that both pastor and deacons must give an account of themselves to God;—that there is nothing in the gospel to sanction cold neglect, careless indifference, or lordly assumption; but everything to produce and require love, tenderness, and concern for his comfort. Oh, that deacons, pastors, and people may be filled with the Holy Ghost, that so, with loving hearts, enlightened minds, and zealous hands, they may walk and work together, to the honour of Christ's holy gospel! Never will our churches be what we wish to see them, until the Holy Spirit is poured upon us, like the precious oil on the head of Aaron; until pastors, deacons, and people receive that anointing in abundance, and thereby become perfectly joined

together in the same mind, and in the same judgment. Good and gracious God, hasten, hasten this desirable and long-sought state of the church, for Jesus' sake !

"O messenger of dear delight,
Whose voice dispels the deepest night,
Sweet peace-proclaiming dove !
With thee at hand to soothe our pains,
No wish unsatisfied remains,
No task, but that of love.

'Tis love unites what sin divides ;
The centre where all bliss resides,
To which the soul once brought,
Reclining on the First Great Cause,
From his abounding sweetness draws
Peace passing human thought.

Sorrow foregoes its nature there,
And life assumes a tranquil air,
Divested of its woes ;
There, sovereign goodness soothes the breast,
'Till then, incapable of rest,
In sacred sure repose."





ARE YOU A CHRISTIAN?

THIS is a momentous question, and ought to be decided. The rule of decision is God's holy word, and that alone, for the same shall judge us at the last day (John xii. 48). Many fancy that they are Christians, but are not. Many profess to be Christians, but they are deceived. The foolish virgins made a profession; they were not suspected; they thought they were right; they persevered until the bridegroom came, and then they found that their "lamps were gone out." Awful state! Fearful discovery! My friend, inquire in time. Examine yourself impartially. Take the lamp of God's word, and *thoroughly* investigate your condition. It is for life or death. Eternity depends on the issue. God of truth, search our inmost souls! God of grace, thoroughly sanctify our natures!

A Christian *is born of God*. There is no real religion without this, for real religion is a new life flowing from a new nature. We may change our opinions, we may alter

our course, but God alone can change our hearts; and unless our hearts are changed we are not Christians. The Holy Spirit, in regeneration, convinces us of sin, humbles us before God, makes us cry out for mercy, leads us to the Lord Jesus Christ, breaks our hearts in contrition, turns our souls against sin, and makes us long, pant, and pray, for holiness. All this springs from a new life, or a new nature produced within us; so that it is all natural. We have not to force ourselves to think, or to feel, or to act, we do so naturally, and without any discernible effort. We see things in a different light, we feel differently toward them, and are in a new world. Old things pass away, and all things become new. Christ is our hope, our peace, our pattern, and our joy. We rest on his sacrifice, rely on his work, rejoice in his grace, and glory in his holy name. We wonder we did not see his beauty before, we grieve that we ever offended him, and we long to glorify him in every thought, word, and action. The world loses its charms, Satan his power, and death its sting. Our eyes are enlightened, our hearts are renewed, our wills are *changed*, our consciences are cleansed, and

our course is the opposite of what it was. We were going to hell, we are now going to heaven. Reader, *are you a Christian?*

A Christian *has the Spirit of Christ*. For if any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his. The Holy Ghost takes possession in the name of Christ, to make us like Christ. He changes the bent of the mind. He turns the whole course of the soul. He effectually alters the disposition. He sets Christ before us as our model. He stirs up desires after conformity to him. He leads us to aim at an exact resemblance. He teaches us to pray for grace, that we may live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present world. As a Spirit of faith, he leads us to believe God's word, and exercise confidence in God's faithfulness. As a Spirit of prayer, he leads us to God's throne, and helps our infirmities in prayer. As a Spirit of love, he inflames our hearts with love to God, to the Saviour, to the saints, and to sinners around us. As a Spirit of power, he enables us to resist Satan, overcome the world, crucify the flesh with its passions and lusts, and to plead and prevail with God. He dwells in us, works in us, *sanctifies* us, and devotes us to the

Saviour's praise. Reader, *are you a Christian ?*

A Christian *is like Christ*. He is anointed with the Spirit of God. He is the temple of God. He is formed to show forth the praises of God. He lives for God. He walks with God. He does the works of God. Jesus is his pattern and perfect example. He often compares himself with Christ, deploring his defects, seeking grace that he may more exactly conform himself to his will, and desiring to copy his example in all things. He lives in Christ, and Christ lives in him. The word of Christ is his law, the frown of Christ is his hell, the smile of Christ is his heaven, and the glory of Christ is his end. He is a living epistle of Christ for all to read, and a copy of Christ for all to admire. He delights to honour Christ, rejoices to hear him exalted, and can never be satisfied until he is exactly like Christ in body, soul, and spirit. He is crucified with Christ to the world. He is risen with Christ to newness of life. He has ascended with Christ, in spirit, to the Father. He bears about in his body the dying of the Lord Jesus, and seeks that the life also of *Jesus* should be manifest in his mortal

flesh (2 Cor. iv. 10, 11). He is a man of another nature, walking by another rule, living for another end, and travelling to another country to what others are. Reader, *are you a Christian?*

Let no man deceive himself; conviction is not conversion, reformation is not sanctification, profession is not possession. The doctrines of Christianity may be embraced, and Christ himself be rejected. A change may take place in a man's conduct, and yet there may be no change in his heart. We may be moral, but not spiritual; amiable, but not holy; other creatures than we were, but not new creatures in Christ Jesus. We are for Christ, or for ourselves. We are saints, or sinners. We are believers, or infidels. We have the life of God within us, or we are dead in trespasses and sins. We have passed from death unto life, or we are under condemnation. Christ is in us, or we are reprobates. Which is it? Ah! which is it? Eternity may depend on the reply. Lord, search us as with candles; and do what thou wilt with us, *only make us Christians indeed.*



THE OBJECT TO BE PURSUED.

"Follow after charity."—1 COR. xiv. 1.

THE word rendered "charity" is love; and the religion of Jesus is the religion of love. It originated in the love of God to us—his free, infinite, and eternal love; and it produces love in us first toward himself, and then toward his beloved people. Love is the standard of real religion, and we have just as much religion as we have love. Love is the bond of union in the church of Christ, and should, therefore, be zealously cultivated, and carefully guarded. The peace, the purity, and the prosperity of the church depends very much upon the love of its members. A loving church is sure to be a peaceful, prosperous, and happy church; but if they have not love, though there may be members, wealth, and quietness, there is no true prosperity. The Corinthian church abounded in gifts, but it was deficient in love; hence its divisions, and the cry, "I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ." To cure

this sad state of things, and bring the whole church into a truly healthy condition, Paul proposes that every man should set his eye and his heart upon love. That this should be the object of pursuit. This he calls the more excellent way, and would lead the Lord's people to prefer it to gifts, however splendid, useful, or valuable they may be. Brethren, nothing is to be preferred to love in the church of Christ; and one of our greatest defects in the present day is the want of love. Many rest satisfied if there are no strifes, or divisions, or gross immoralities; they think the church is in a good state, though there is little or no warm-hearted, zealous, self-denying love. But this is a mistake. Let us briefly consider Paul's kind exhortation, and let us endeavour to reduce it to practice.

What are we to seek? Love to the brethren. Love, similar to that which Jesus felt. Love, strong, active, and determined, as displayed by the apostle himself. Love to all saints for Jesus' sake, and love to all saints under all circumstances. Love to the poorest, the weakest, and the most imperfect of the Lord's family. Though they differ from us in doctrine, in discipline, in many other things, yet if they belong to

Christ, we should love them. Every one should have a place in the warm affections of our hearts, if they prove that they have a place in the heart of Christ. To live in the neglect of love, is to live in sin. To be cold and indifferent toward one another, is contrary to the law of Christ. He says, "Love one another *as* I have loved you." It is practically neglecting the admonition of the Holy Spirit, who says, "*See that ye love one another, with a pure heart, fervently.*" Love adorns the Christian character, silences the church's foes, makes the loving one happy, and brings honour to the Saviour's name. Vain is our profession of Christ, vain our costly alms-deeds, vain our mighty faith, vain our painful sufferings, and vain our splendid gifts, if we are destitute of holy love. Let us ponder deeply and prayerfully the testimony of the Holy Spirit, by the apostle, upon this point. Paul places himself before us with all his costly endowments, with all his wondrous works, with all his varied sufferings, and that he may impress and deeply affect our minds, he says, "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of *angels*, and have not love, I am become as *sounding brass*, or a tinkling cymbal; and

though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not love, *I am nothing*; and though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, *it profiteth me nothing.*" How solemn, how interesting, how affecting is this statement! Can we wonder that he should urge his beloved friends, and while urging *them*, urge *us*, to "*follow after love?*"

Love sometimes seems to take its flight from the church; it even appears to take its flight from our bosoms. We can look at persons whom we believe to be Christians, and feel no love to them. Nay, at times, we have no desire to love them. We can pass them without speaking, or speak without sincere affection. This must be wrong. This never ought to be tolerated by us for one hour. We should go upon our knees, and confess it before God as a sin against the Saviour's own commandment. We should plead with God to fill our hearts with his own sweet love, to give us the Spirit of love, power, and of a sound mind. We should carry our unloving and unlovely spirits and tempers to the cross of Jesus,

and seek that our old man may be crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed. We should carefully watch against what is opposed to love, realize it as a sin, and deeply deplore it before our heavenly Father's throne. We should diligently cultivate a loving spirit, remembering that it is the very image of God, and our nearest assimilation to the Lord Jesus Christ. Does it seem to evade us, to fly from us? Let us follow it with determined step, with patient perseverance, with strong cries and tears to God for help. Is it opposed to our natural disposition? Let us yield up ourselves unto God, that he may sanctify us wholly in body, soul, and spirit.

Love is humble; it is never proud of itself, nor will it allow its possessor to boast, or to undervalue others, in order to exalt himself. Love is patient; it will not fly at every supposed insult, or be provoked by every appearance of neglect. Love is active; it will do, or give, or go, to comfort, or relieve, or benefit, any of its objects. Love is self-denying; it looks from itself, it loses sight of itself, and wishes to do others good, and make others happy. Love is liberal; it will allow others to think differently, to *act differently*, without being prejudiced or

offended, except God be dishonoured, and his cause injured. "Love," says the Holy Spirit, "suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Love never faileth." Let us, therefore, heartily, earnestly, and constantly follow after love. It is the object of Satan's special hatred, consequently, he makes the most determined opposition to its exercise, and endeavours by all means to prevent its cultivation. It is also opposed to all the selfish principles of our fallen nature, and is, therefore, opposed by them all. But we should ever remember that God requires it, not only in his law, but also in his gospel. Nor can he be pleased with us, if we neglect, or trifle, or run counter to this his holy and necessary commandment. He sent his own Son to set us the example, to show us that love may be cultivated, and constantly manifested even in a world like ours, and under the most unfavourable circumstances. *The church deeply needs the exercise of*

love. Her many imperfections,—her unseemly divisions,—the unfounded prejudices of one part of the body against the other,—her low condition,—her sorrows and sufferings,—all these call for love. They unite, and with one strong, energetic, and solemn voice they cry, “Follow after love.” All admire love. It is the most powerful instrument we can wield. Would we spread the truth? Would we conquer the enemies of the gospel? Would we win over the young to the cause of God? Would we silence gainsayers? Would we close the mouths of infidels? Would we effectually conquer Rome? In one word, would we honour God, exalt Jesus, sow to the Spirit, heal the wounds of the church, make a good impression on the world, or be really happy ourselves, it must be effected by love? We must, one and all, in public and private, by searching the heart, by pleading with God, by denying self, by using all the means which God has appointed, or the gospel furnished, “*follow after love.*”

Reader, is love an object of admiration with you? Does it appear as most desirable, *not only* in others, but also in *yourself*? Do you sigh, cry, pray, and pant

for it? Are you mourning over the want of it in others, but especially in yourself? Is it the object of your pursuit? Or, can you indulge in unlovely tempers, use and sanction harsh and uncharitable expressions, and live in a state of alienation from God's people because they have at some time offended you? Is this the case? If so, how dwelleth the love of God in you? How can you expect to enjoy nearness to God, or sweet communion with God? How can you wonder, if thus grieving the Holy Spirit, he leaves you to yourself, and your heart grows hard, your evidences are beclouded, and your religion dwindles into a mere form? Would the Scriptures be true if it were otherwise? You are a backslider in heart, and unless you repent, the Lord will leave you to be filled with your own ways. You are sowing the seeds of wormwood, and it will be bitterness in the latter end. Religion is love. Love to God and love to man. We have just so much religion as we have love, and no more. If we have no love, we have no religion. May the Holy Spirit shed abroad the love of God in our hearts, and lead us to love every one that loves God with tender affection; and to love all others with pity and

The Object to be Pursued. 327

assion. Then shall we prove that we
are children of God, by loving him and
obeying his commandments; then shall we
preach the doctrine of God our Saviour in
simplicity; then shall we allure sinners
from the paths of sin and death; and then
shall we be the ornaments of the church,
the glory of Christ. Let us, therefore,
PRACTISE LOVE AFTER CHARITY."

That perfect love is perfect bliss,
Proof rises all around;
Nor shall felicity but this
In earth or heaven be found.

This is the joy of joy I know,
That can delight impart;
Warm as the ruby tides that flow
Incessant from my heart.

This is the joy that angels feel,
Where harps celestial move;
And the fierce anguish known in hell,
Is perfect want of love!

Say—is not this the dazzling light
That decks the seraph's crown?
What is perdition's tenfold night,
But love's eternal frown?





MAY AND MUST ;
OR, PRESENT AND FUTURE.

THE present differs very materially from the future,—there are many things which we *may* do now, and there are many which we *must* do by and bye. We *may* refuse to come to the Lord Jesus Christ now, that we may have life; but if we do, we *must* suffer the bitter pangs of eternal death, and for ever reap the due desert of such wickedness and folly. We *may* refuse to come to God's mercy-seat as invited by his mercy now; but we *must* stand before Christ's judgment-seat, when summoned by his justice by and bye. We *may* refuse to confess our sins, that they may be pardoned; but we *must* give an account and suffer the just punishment of them, if we do. We *may* refuse to humble ourselves before God's feet; but we *must* be humbled under his power, if we do. We *may* refuse to receive what free grace presents to us in the gospel; but we *must* endure what his justice awards in another world, if we do. He that will not be saved by free grace, must be punished with ever-

lasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.

We *may* be saved now ; but if we are not, we *must* be lost for ever. We *may* become the friends of God now ; but if we do not, we *must* be treated as his enemies for ever. We *may* be united to the person of Jesus here ; but if we are not, we *must* be banished from his presence in another world. The *future* depends on the *present*. As we sow, we reap. As we treat God now, he will treat us another day. He bears with us at present, he is loath to punish us ; but mercy has its bounds, and forbearance has its limits. When these are reached then all is over, for then nothing remains but “ a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation.” When once God gives us up, all is over. When he says, “ *Let him alone,*” our destiny is fixed. But this is never done until justice requires it. If a man *will not* be saved, ought he not to be left to the consequences of his own choice and determination ? If he will refuse to hear God’s voice, listen to his solemn warnings, or to accept loving invitations, what can be done ?

himself asks, “ *What can I do more I have done ?*”

Reader, what can God do more for thee,

except he force thee to be saved? And would this be right? When Israel would not hearken to his voice, he gave them up (Ps. lxxi. 11, 12). And shall God act differently toward thee, to what he did toward his own favoured people? You stand on solemn ground. Your situation requires the most serious thought. Death, judgment, and eternity are just before you,—an eternal hell, an eternal heaven,—and one of them must be your portion. You *may* go to heaven, but if you will not, you *must* go to hell. If you go to hell, it will be because you chose to walk in the way to it! and chose to do so in preference to walking in the way to heaven. God will never send you to hell except death finds you in the way to it; and if it does, what can you expect, but to arrive at the place to which you have been journeying by choice? What can you expect from a just and holy God, but to receive the wages for which you have been labouring? "The wages of sin are death," eternal death; or the separation of both soul and body from God, from holiness, from happiness, and from ease, for ever. This must be dreadful, but who can say that it will not be just? What! work hard in the ways of sin for twenty, forty, or sixty years, with

express understanding that the wages of sin are death, and then say it is not just to be paid the wages for which you have so long, so diligently, and so determinedly laboured! Is this consistent? If you *will* do the work, expect the wages. If you *will* travel the road, expect to arrive at the end to which it leads. If you *will* live God's enemy, do not expect to be treated as if you had been his friend. No, no, be consistent. If you wish to go to heaven, take the road that leads to it, and be sure you take the right road. If you wish to dwell with God in another world, be reconciled to him in this. If you wish to be happy in eternity, then seek to be holy in time.

Well, friend, how is it to be? You *may* go on in sin, or you *may* repent and turn to God. You *may* reject the Saviour, or you *may* receive him as God's free gift. You *may* come to Jesus and have life, or you *may* refuse to do so, and sink into eternal death. God hath set before you in his word the way of life, and the way of death, therefore choose life that you may live. He has opened a way for sinners, by the sacrifice of his dear Son; and He is willing to give his Holy Spirit to sinners, if they ask him, in fervent prayer. You *may* be happy; but

if you will not, you *must* be for ever miserable. You *may*, this is of pure mercy, you *must*, that is of strict justice. You *may*, this lays you under great responsibility ; you *must*, and this calls for the most solemn consideration. You *may*, and therefore should bless God for his kindness ; you *must*, and therefore beware how you trifle with his grace. You *may*, oh, seize and improve the opportunity ! you *must*, oh, flee, flee from the wrath to come ! You *may*, oh, lose not one moment, for there is no time to spare ! you *must*, oh, delay not, for delays have landed thousands in hell ! “ We *must* all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.” The Scriptures *must* be fulfilled. God *must* be faithful. We *must* repent of sin, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and come unto God by him, or WE ARE UNDONE FOR EVER.

O God, my inmost soul convert,
And deeply on my thoughtful heart
Eternal things impress ;
Give me to feel their solemn weight,
And save me ere it be too late :
Wake me to righteousness.



PREPARED FOR THE WORST.

I AM prepared for the worst, said a young man, as he went off on a journey, with his great coat, wrapper, and umbrella. And in the sense in which he used the words, he was, as he only referred to a little cold or rain. But the words may be taken in a much more important sense, and even then there are some who can say, "I am prepared for the worst." What is the worst? and what is it to be prepared for the worst? These are very important, interesting, and solemn questions. Let us look at them for a few moments.

DEATH! Is that the worst? So perhaps some would think. It is the most solemn event that can happen to us in this world. It has been called "the king of terrors," and "of all terrible things" it has been said to be "the most terrible." Well, death, in one view of it, is a bad thing. It is the enemy of our nature. We cannot love it. It makes wives widows, children fatherless, and affectionate husbands unhappy. It has caused floods of tears to

flow, and human nature to shudder. But it is *most* terrible to ITS VICTIM. It terminates his mortal course. It ends his existence in the present state. It introduces him to an unseen world, to an unknown state of existence. It terminates his plans, schemes, and pleasures, and puts his purposes and pretensions to the test. It is very solemn. Are we prepared for it? Except our sins are pardoned, our natures are renewed, and our souls are reconciled to God, we cannot be. Sin is the sting of death. It gives it power to injure us, to wound us, to destroy our brightest hopes. If it reign in us, it will ruin us. If death finds us in an unpardoned state, it will be dreadful. But if, through faith in Jesus, our sins are all forgiven us,—if, by the operation of the Holy Spirit, the stony heart has been taken away, and the heart of flesh given,—if we are reconciled to God by the death of his Son, and are at peace with him,—we are prepared for death. It may seize, but it cannot hold us; it may lay the body in the grave, but it cannot touch the soul. Its very nature is changed to us, and instead of injuring, it only lays the body to sleep in the grave, and introduces the soul to God and glory.

JUDGMENT! Is standing before the judgment-seat the worst? So some would . And it is enough to awaken the most serious thoughts, and arouse ten thousand fears. To appear before Divine Justice, represented by the Son of God, whose eyes are as a flame of fire, to give account of our conduct, or rather misconduct, for twenty, or forty, or sixty years, how solemn! how fearful this! To account for sins against the best of beings, against the plainest precepts, for so many years, and to feel that we have not the slightest excuse to offer for our conduct! He never provoked us by his conduct towards us, nor injured us in his dealings with us. We sinned just because we would sin, and we persevered in sin because we perversely preferred doing so, to obeying his wise and holy precepts. He has commanded us to prepare to give an account in his word, he threatens by his officer death, and he will summon us to appear before his bar by the sound of the archangel's trumpet. Are we prepared for this? We may be, *but are we* ? If so, we have embraced the Saviour, and are justified through his finished work. We have sought and received the Holy Spirit, and are sanctified by his

power, grace, and indwelling. We have come to the Father through his Son, and he has blotted out all our sins in his precious blood. But is this the case? If we have only one sin to answer for, we are undone. We might have obtained a pardon,—we were promised one, if we applied for it while Jesus was on the throne of grace; but we neglected or refused, and now the door of hope is shut, the throne of grace is vacated, and mercy has given place to justice. That we have one sin laid to our charge, to be accounted for by ourselves, is wholly and entirely our own fault. God was ready to pardon. Jesus was exalted to give repentance and the remission of sins. We were assured again and again, that by him all that believe are justified from all things. But if we would not go unto him that we might have life,—if we refused to receive the pardon presented, or to seek the reconciliation promised, who is to blame? We might have been pardoned; but we would not stoop to accept it. We might have been justified from all things, in the finished work of the Lord Jesus, but we would not embrace that work; and now our pride and self-sufficiency have brought us low. If one sin is charged

upon us, it is because Christ Jesus has been rejected by us.

HELL! This is the worst. Nothing can be compared to hell. What is it but the wrath of God endured, the endless lashings of a guilty conscience experienced, the desert of sin inflicted upon the sinner? In hell, black despair reigns, remorse is eternally felt, and pain and agony must be eternally endured. In hell, justice appears in all its terrible majesty, mercy is for ever excluded, and sinners are left to torment themselves, and to be tormented by Satan and his angels without end. Reader, are you prepared for this? Can thine heart endure, and can thy hands be strong, in the day that God shall deal with thee? *Will you go to hell?* This question is proposed to you every time you hear the gospel. *Will you go to hell?* This question I most solemnly ask you now. You need not, for there is a way of escape. You need not, for God is good and ready to forgive. You need not, for the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin. You need not, for the Spirit and the Bride say, "Come, and take of the fountain of the water of life freely." But if you refuse to come, I protest unto you that you shall

surely perish. If you reject the Saviour, I ask you in his own words, "HOW SHALL YOU ESCAPE THE DAMNATION OF HELL?" Are you prepared to linger eternally in endless pains? Are you prepared to dwell with devouring fire, to languish in everlasting burnings? *Are you?* Can you be? Let me beseech you with all earnestness, with all tenderness, to lay these things to heart. Flee, flee at once to Jesus. Receive him into your heart by faith. Renounce all your refuges of lies, give up yourself to him, and spend your remaining days for Him; so will you be prepared for the worst. Yes, then you may look through time and all its changes, and into eternity with all its solemnities, and sing,—

Now let the wildest storms arise,
Let tempests mingle earth and skies
I'm safe in Christ, the ark of grace,
And soon shall see him face to face.

Death will to me be life and peace,
A rest from sin, a sweet release;
For I through Jesu's precious blood,
Shall rise from death, to live with God.





SUPPOSE I SHOULD DIE SUDDENLY.

SUDDEN death is a very solemn event. One has recently taken place here. It has a voice. It is sent with a message to us. It says, "Be ye also ready." It reminds us that time is short. That life is uncertain. That death is near. That eternity is just at hand. That there is only a thin veil between us and the eternal world. That we may be called away at any moment. That dying is going the way whence we shall not return. Death is always solemn! Sudden death is peculiarly so. It should make us serious. It should lead to reflection. Let me, then, direct my thoughts to it for a few minutes.

Suppose I should die suddenly. I may. There is no security against it. It is possible, if not probable; but what renders it improbable?

"Dangers stand thick through all the ground,
To push us to the tomb."

Some one of these dangers may push me down, and in a moment the body and soul may part. Well, suppose it should be so.

340 *Suppose I should Die Suddenly.*

am I ready ? Is it an event to be dreaded on my own account, or only on account of others ? To the true Christian, sudden death is sudden glory. The soul departs to be with Christ, which is far better than remaining here. But would this be my case ? Am I in Christ ? Is Christ found in my heart the hope of glory ? Is my body the temple of the Holy Spirit ? Am I born again ? Solemn inquiries these ! Without a new birth there can be no salvation. Jesus has most distinctly and positively declared it. His words are peculiarly solemn and striking. May they sink down deep into our hearts. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." This is true of all men, of every man. Therefore it is true of me. I must be born again, or I cannot see, I cannot enter into, the kingdom of God. I am not qualified for membership with the church here, nor prepared to partake of the inheritance of the saints in light. Ought I not, then, to examine myself very closely ? To compare the state of my heart, and the course of my life, with the word of God. If *I should* fancy that I am born again when I *am not*, and then if, while deceived by such a *fancy*, I should die suddenly, what dread-

Suppose I should Die Suddenly. 341

ful consequences would follow! Such a mistake could never be rectified. The effects of it must be endured for ever. How very strange it is that we can rest satisfied one hour, without good evidence that we are born again, when we know that we may die suddenly, and that after death our state is fixed for ever!

Suppose I should die suddenly to-day. I may. But if I do, where shall I spend this night? Where shall I be to-morrow? What will be my portion for ever? Jesus tells us of one who in this life had everything his heart could wish, and to warn us against neglecting the soul while feasting the body, he utters these solemn words: "The rich man died and was buried; and in hell he lift up his eyes being in torments." I doubt not but he was taken by surprise; he never thought that he should sink into hell. I dare say that none of his friends judged so uncharitably, or rather so justly, as to suppose that he was lifting up his eyes in hell, being in torments. But it was so, and he is in torments now, and in these torments he will remain for ever. O fearful case! But will it be mine? Is it possible that it may be my doom, or that of any one nearly related to me? Oh, it is possible,

342 *Suppose I should Die Suddenly.*

perhaps more than possible ! Who has not a relative in hell ? Who has not a relative on the road to hell ? What a dreadful meeting it must be to meet near and once dear relatives in hell, and yet it is constantly taking place ! If I go to hell, whom shall I meet there ? If my relatives go to hell, can they cast any part of the blame on me ? Have I warned them ? Have I done all I can to prevent so fearful a doom ? Conscience, I charge thee be honest, answer me, have I done all I can to prevent my relatives from going to that place of torment ?

I may die suddenly. Then let me see to it at once that all is right for eternity. Let me make sure work. Let there be no procrastination. Let there be no excuses indulged. Let me never rest satisfied another night without faith in Christ, repentance toward God, and that holiness, without which no man can see the Lord. Let me ask of God to give me his Holy Spirit, to renew me in the spirit of my mind, to take away the stony heart out of my flesh, and to give me a heart of flesh. Then if I die suddenly, how glorious the transition will be. How wonderful, to be one hour in a world like this, engaged in its duties, enduring its trials, and suffering from its habits and customs ; and

Suppose I should Die Suddenly. 343

the next, to be in the presence of God, angels, and glorified saints. To be free from sin, sorrow, care, and trouble ; beyond the reach of doubt, fear, and the enemy of the soul ; and to enjoy certainty, satisfaction, and the fulness of joy for ever. But the alternative ! Ah, the alternative ! If I die suddenly, and die out of Christ, if I die unsanctified and unsaved, how dreadful even the supposition ! but what must the reality be ? To be one hour in comfort, surrounded by relatives and friends, in the land of hope and mercy ; and the next in the regions of despair, filled with anguish, bitter regrets, and hopeless misery !

Reader, you may die suddenly, you may die to-day, and if you do, your state will be fixed for ever. Do not conclude that you are safe without a thorough examination. Let nothing decide your case but God's unerring word. There is but one foundation for a sinner's hope, and that is Christ Jesus. There is no certainty of life beyond the present moment. Therefore make your calling and your election sure.

Seize the kind promise while it waits,
And march to Zion's heavenly gates ;
Believe, and take the promised rest,
Obey, and be for ever bless'd.



AN ADDRESS TO A NEWLY FORMED
CHURCH OF CHRIST.

BELOVED in the Lord Jesus Christ, as you have covenanted to walk together as a Church of Christ, in obedience to his commands, suffer the word of exhortation. You profess to be Christians, and if you are so indeed you possess "the Spirit of Christ," for, "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his." You are called "The light of the world," "The salt of the earth," "The epistles of Christ," "The temples of the Holy Ghost," "The children of the living God." You have a relation to God and a relation to man. You are bound to glorify God in your body and in your spirit which are God's : and you are commanded to "do good unto all men, especially unto them which are of the household of faith;" to "give no offence to any man, neither to the Jew, nor to the Greek, nor to the church of God." You are united to Jesus, whose fulness is opened to supply you, and who is exalted at God's right hand to

bles you. You are united to one another, you have "one Lord, one faith, one baptism;" and have pledged yourselves to seek each other's good. You profess to seek the glory of God, your own edification, and the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom, by this your union: ever keep these things in mind, for your peace, prosperity, and comfort, in a great measure depend thereon. You are not your own; you are not at liberty to seek your own gratification, but in subordination to the great ends you profess to seek. Jesus bought you with his blood, he claims you as his own, and commands you to walk according to his word. His eye is always upon you, and he is either glorified or dishonoured by every action you perform. Your privileges are great, and your duties are many; and ever remember, privileges are to be enjoyed in the performance of the duties required. You have received a kingdom, you are entitled to grace, and you are exhorted to have it, Heb. xii. 28. iv. 16. You can only serve God acceptably, as you serve him under the influence of his own grace, according to his word, with a view to his glory. Receive then with meekness, and with a desire to walk according to them, the commands of Jesus.

346 *An Address to a Newly Formed*

He bids you *love one another*; even as he has loved you. Indulge no evil surmisings in reference to each other; charity thinketh no evil. Beware lest you encourage a spirit of jealousy or envy; it will disturb your peace and destroy your usefulness. Guard against speaking evil one of another. Brethren, the Lord says, "Speak evil of no man." Watch against an unforgiving spirit, but as "God for Christ's sake has forgiven you, so also do ye." Be ever ready to assist one another, according as God has given you ability, both in temporal and spiritual things. Avoid a consorious, cavilling, captious turn of mind; it is the bane of spirituality, and a pestilence in a Church. Love one another, for ye are brethren; the friends of Jesus; the foes of Satan; and the representatives of the Saviour to the world.

Jesus bids you *strive together*. Strive together in prayer to God for your officers and fellow-members. Strive together to support and extend the cause of God. Strive to exhibit the Christian character, and to show forth his praises who hath called you by his grace. Cleave to one another and to the Lord, with full purpose of heart; and provoke one another to love and to good works. Satan will endeavour to dissuade

you, and sow discord among you ; he hates to see saints in union, and employs every stratagem to prevent it. Guard against a spirit of pride and self-consequence, it will render you miserable, useless, and barren ; you will be uncomfortable in yourselves and a plague to all about you. Endeavour by all means, at all times, to “keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” Never allow yourselves to carry into the world the concerns of the church ; carry them to the Lord in prayer, but never tell them to any other. It is tale-bearing, and a breach of your church-covenant ; a disgrace to the person who practises it, and a trouble to the church that permits it.

Do all things to edification When you meet at your houses, or in the house of God, always aim to edify one another. You do one another good or evil every time you meet ; therefore let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, that you may be able to comfort, admonish, and advise one another. Be present if possible when your brethren meet together for prayer and praise, and never absent yourself from any ordinance except lawfully detained. The diligent soul shall be made fat, but the idle soul shall suffer hunger.

348 *An Address to a Newly Formed*

Let all your things be done with charity. Never put a bad construction on an action if you can put a good one. "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." "Exhort one another daily." Imitate God as dear children. "Be clothed with humility." "Let each esteem other better than himself." Put on "bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering." "Be kindly affectioned one to another, with brotherly love," giving honour one to another. "Let the same mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." Consider one another as compassed with infirmities, exposed to temptations, and possessing like passions with yourselves.

"Receive ye one another as Christ also received you to the glory of God." "Those who are weak in the faith receive ye." You are not at liberty to reject the lambs of the flock, those who through timidity say least, often wear the best. A knowledge of self, faith in Jesus, and a willingness to observe his commands, is all you can consistently require in order to membership with you. Never set your standard too high, or think *the Lord* will work by your rule; he is a *Sovereign*, and doeth according to his will, requiring you to walk according to his word.

Submit to the discipline prescribed in God's word ; never wish to keep any in the church whose spirit and conduct say they ought to be out of it. Consult the honour of Christ and the good of the cause upon these matters, not your own feelings. Jesus requires you to pluck out a right eye if it is an offence, an hindrance, or a stumbling-block ; and to cut off a right hand. Strive and pray that the church may be kept pure ; sound in doctrine and holy in practice. The door out of the church should be exactly of the same dimensions as the door in ; and there is sinful partiality if it is not so.

Never make private differences public except it be absolutely necessary. Observe the rule given by the Saviour, Matt. xviii. 15-20. Never report a quarrel until you have reproved and prayed for the offender. Offences will come, always endeavour to remove them out of the way as quickly as possible. Be sure you never encourage any fellow member who retails the saints' faults ; the Lord tells you, an angry countenance will drive away a back-biting tongue. If you refuse to receive they will soon leave off their practice. Make all due allowance for your brethren, remember you also have your infirmities, and are exposed to temptations.

350 *An Address to a Newly Formed*

If God leave you, sin will soon appear on you. If you see a brother about to sin, reprove him; if he fall, pray for him; this is the way to convert him, and hide a "multitude of sins" (James v. 18, 29). Never sanction sin in any, nor condemn rashly: strive against a hasty spirit, and study to be quiet. Always aim to act in every place and under every circumstance, that observers may be obliged to say, That person is a Christian. Let your light so shine, and your good works be seen, that God may be glorified.

Be very careful over your spirit and conduct at church meetings; these are either the honour or disgrace of the church. Remember you are in God's house, you profess to be tender of his honour, his eye is upon you, and the peace, prosperity, and comfort of the church greatly depend upon your conduct and spirit. Let it be lovely, praiseworthy, and holy. Keep your mouth as with a bridle if you feel your nature rise; crucify the old man; mortify the flesh; follow peace and the things which make for peace. Edification and the growth of spirituality should be the great object of all church-meetings; if it is not so, they are carnal and will become a curse.

Aim to be useful in the church, sympa-

thise with the poor, the sick, the tempted, the young, the aged, the backsliding, the penitent, your pastor and deacons; all have a claim upon you, and may be benefited by you. Encourage seekers, exhort the lukewarm, caution the rash, invite the backslider to turn again to the Lord, visit the sick and dying, speak comfortably to the tempted and sorrowful, and pray for all. Bring all you can under the word, and beseech God to meet with them when there.

Always bear in mind, you must give an account of yourselves to God. You are accountable for all you say, do, or occasion to be done; Jesus "will bring every work into judgment with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." Your actions are permanent though they appear but transient. Be not a great talker, aim to be a holy, humble, useful walker. Shun the company of those who sow discord among brethren. Keep a good conscience. Give honour to whom honour is due. Beware of the spirit of the world. "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God," either by lightness, looseness, or bitterness; but sow the seeds of righteousness, sow to the Spirit and ye shall reap life everlasting. Avoid the appearance of evil. "Walk circum-

352 *An Address to a Newly Formed*

spectly." "Walk worthy of God." "Be of one mind, live in peace, and the God of love and peace shall be with you."

Endeavour to carry out your principles in your families, let family prayer be regular, serious, and fervent. Recommend religion by your spirit and conduct to your children. They will take more notice of what you *do*, than of what you *say*. So walk before them that you may be able to say to them without blushing, Be ye followers of me, even as I am of Christ. "Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." They are a trust committed to you, and their sanctification and salvation should lay nearer your hearts than anything else. "Husbands love your wives;" are they unconverted? Endeavour to win them by a lovely spirit and holy conduct. "Wives submit yourselves to your own husbands," study their comfort in all things; are they without? strive by kindness, a manifest desire to make them happy, and a word in season, to bring them within. "God is able to make all grace to abound toward you, so that ye having all sufficiency may abound in every good work." Ye who are children be kind, attentive, and ready to assist your parents; gospel privileges do not

dissolve natural relations, or free you from moral obligations. Servants, let religion shine in your conduct before your fellow-servants, your masters and mistresses: they will keep their eyes upon you, and expect great things from you. Be strictly honest; never take away behind your mistress's back, what you would not before her face. Be very industrious; you are hired to work, not to be idle. Be clean; cleanliness is an honour to a Christian, dirt is a disgrace. Never be pert; God's word says, you are not to answer again (Titus ii. 9). Guard against eye-service; you are directed to act towards your masters, as you would toward the Lord Jesus Christ (Ephes. vi. 5-9). Godly, consistent servants, are very useful members in a church, but idle, gossiping, pert, dirty, talkative ones are a great mischief and disgrace. The Lord takes notice of all these things, and gives directions about them in his word; therefore they cannot be unimportant.

Be particular as to the connections you form; many have been robbed of their simplicity, spirituality, and humility, through associating with proud, censorious, licentious professors; or from going too

354 *An Address to a Newly Formed*

far and too frequently with the worldly. If you are single, be very careful to whom you give up your company, or allow to entangle your affections; you are at liberty to marry "only in the Lord." If you dare to unite with an unregenerate person, you despise the authority of God the Father, reject the command of the Lord Jesus Christ, grieve the Holy Spirit, and ensure to yourselves misery and sorrow. Your bodies are "the temples of the Holy Ghost," "the members of Christ," and should not be united to the enemies of God, the servants of Satan. Resist Satan when he comes with such a temptation, for many have been entangled and overcome; and as the consequence have spent their days in misery and their years in sorrow. Make God's word your guide, keep the Saviour's company, imitate the most holy of the saints, and keep yourselves unspotted from the world.

Strive to be useful to the world; if you are going to heaven, and believe it to be a holy happy place, endeavour to take some one or more with you. Be upon the watch for opportunities to do good. Usefulness in God's church is a great honour, uselessness a sad sign: barren fig trees

are cumberers of the ground. You will either do good or harm in the church, glorify God or please Satan. Always speak truth, never lie on any account; never allow yourselves to colour anything you relate, God's ear listens to every word you speak. Punctually perform your promises, never make positive, unconditional ones; but use caution in all your dealings, that you may preserve a conscience void of offence toward God and toward man. Reverence age and spirituality, pity weakness, and always loathe sin under every form.

Ever view yourselves as the property of God, for his glory; as the property of the church, for her good. You are debtors to God for his grace, for pardon, righteousness, and eternal life. You owe a debt of gratitude and obedience. You are in debt to the church; she has a right to your presence, your prayers, your sympathies, and your influence. A Christian has no private property, all is lent him with this command, "Occupy till I come." By love, then, serve one another. "Reckon yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin," and unto the world; "but alive unto God," and to the interests of his church, "through

Jesus Christ our Lord." A Christian spirit is a public spirit ; and a consistent Christian will always aim to lay himself out for the extension of the Redeemer's cause, and the glory of Jehovah's name. Happy must be that church, of whose members it may be said, They have done what they could ! They have done what they could to support, establish, and increase the cause : they have done what they could to add to the spirituality, to maintain the peace, and extend the usefulness of the church. Brethren and sisters, have you done what *you* could ? Does the love of Christ constrain you ? Does zeal for his glory impel you ? Is it your heart's desire that sinners may be saved, that saints may be consistent, and that Zion may be made a praise in the whole earth ? If it is, let your conduct and conversation prove it beyond a doubt ; and so live and so walk, that you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. Jesus has been grievously wounded in the house of his friends, religion now suffers from the conduct of its professors ; if therefore you have any concern for the good of souls, if any love to Christ, if any zeal for God, if any desire to be useful, think on these things, " So

“speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty.” Show your faith by your works; the holiness of your principles by the consistency of your practice. Live not unto yourselves, but unto him who died for you and rose again; and whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.

View your Pastor as God’s servant, sent with the Lord’s message to you. Expect to receive from him not only comfort but reproof; not only instruction but exhortation. Never take offence at God’s word as delivered by him; he must give an account of what he delivers, you of the use you make of it. Beware how you apply to others what belongs to yourself. “Receive with meekness the engrafted word.” Look more at the message, than the manner in which it is delivered: take it as coming from God, and be sure to put it to a good use. If Satan can get you to despise, cavil, or quarrel with the preacher, he can effectually prevent your edification. Esteem God’s servants “very highly in love for their work’s sake, and be at peace among yourselves.”

Finally, brethren, endeavour to keep up constant fellowship with God, seek personal holiness, and give yourselves up unreservedly to the Lord. Look upon one another as brethren, united by ties more sacred and more close than any natural band. View one another in Christ, as members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. Be concerned to know that the Spirit dwells in you and among you, as the glorifier of Christ, the sanctifier of his people, the expounder of the scriptures, and the author of edification and peace. Bring every gift and talent you possess, and consecrate them to the church's service and the Redeemer's praise. Wrestle with God for his presence in your assemblies, and his blessing on your souls. Realise your responsibility, and let self be denied, while patience, forbearance, and brotherly kindness have their perfect work. And may the God of all grace, who hath called you unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered awhile, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, and settle you. To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. *Amen.*



AN IMPORTANT QUESTION :

WHAT HAVE I DONE TO SAVE A SOUL TO-DAY ?

THOUSANDS are perishing around me. Hell is enlarging itself. God saves souls by human instrumentality. He saves by the simplest means. He points to some just on the verge of hell, and says, "Save them with fear, plucking them out of the fire." Paul's object was by all means to save some. He became all things to all men, that he might save the more. What have I done this day in order to save a soul from death? Have I pleaded with God, as one should plead for the deliverance of a never-dying soul from eternal flames? Have I spoken kindly and affectionately to any one about sin, and the salvation which is in the Lord Jesus? Have I given a tract, a handbill, or a little book, accompanying it with fervent prayer for the power of the Holy Ghost to attend it? "*A tract may save a soul.*" God may speak by it—it may suggest a thought, which may work, and work, until the

Saviour be sought and found. And can I, believing this, neglect to give away tracts? A word spoken, or a passage quoted, may save a soul. God has often used such simple means as these. And shall I neglect to speak to those about me, or fear to set God's word before them. A letter written to a friend, has saved a soul. God works by letters written out of love to his name, with zeal for his glory, in order to bring sinners to his throne. And shall I fail to write, when I cannot speak to my friends, to warn them to flee from the wrath to come. Oh, if we all prayed for sinners, realizing their great danger, and dreadful doom—if we took advantage of the opportunities that offer, to speak of Jesus, to those who are perishing around us—if we gave tracts and little books to those we meet, praying God to bless them—if once a week, or oftener, we wrote a letter to some friend, to direct attention to eternal things, how much more good might be done, how much evil might be prevented, how many souls may be saved, how greatly our congregations may be increased, how *the* Lord Jesus would be honoured, and *what* glory we should bring to our God, *and* his cause! This would prove, that we

really believe God's word, that we sympathise with sinners in their danger, that we are in downright earnest to save souls from death, that we wish to see God's church flourish, that we realize our obligation and responsibility. Then God, even our God would bless us. Doubts and fears would leave us, joy and peace would be enjoyed by us, and all Christians would confess that we are the seed which the Lord hath blessed. O, my brethren, let us examine ourselves daily! Let us ask ourselves every night, *What have I done to save a soul this day?* If I do nothing, can I be guiltless? If I do nothing, can I be honest to my profession? If I do nothing, is it possible that I can understand the gospel? If I do nothing, can I be living in fellowship with God? If I do nothing, ought I to be a member of a church of Christ? If I do nothing, ought I not to give up all profession of religion at once and for ever? Conscience, be honest, and speak!

How few realize the value of the soul! How few make any hearty, direct, and daily attempts to save souls from death! And yet this is the most important business in which we can be engaged. Nothing

will be reflected on with such pleasure on a death-bed, nothing will be reviewed with such delight from the judgment-seat of Christ. He answers not the end of his existence, who does not habitually seek to honour God, by leading souls to the Saviour. He does not drink into the Spirit of Christ, who does not strive to turn men from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. Of course we can only do so instrumentally. But it is thus that God brings men to repentance and faith. He is the great agent, but he uses human instruments, and he will use us if we are fit for his work, and desirous to be employed for his glory. He puts honour upon us by employing us. He meets us, blesses us, and makes us happy when we are so employed : and thus we prove the truth of his word, that *in* keeping his commandments there is a great reward. If, therefore, we would be happy in our Christian profession—if we would win honours to be worn before the throne of God and of the Lamb—if we would escape the snares of Satan, and the delusions of the world—if we would adorn the doctrine of our Lord and Saviour—if we would make a good impression upon the present generation, and secure a good

name in that which follows—if we would live like saints, and die like conquerors, let us daily do something to save souls from death. The work is most important, our opportunities daily become less, the honour is unspeakably glorious, and the reward is lasting as eternity—let us therefore daily endeavour to save souls from death. Let us speak to those we can, and write to those we cannot. Let us make it our business, and follow it as our pleasure; nor rest satisfied until we can say with our beloved Lord, “My work is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.” Verily we have been guilty; let us feel it, confess it, obtain pardon for the past, and plead for grace for the future. Oh, that every member of the Church of Christ would act thus, then the Church of Jesus would soon look “forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners.” Thus saith the Lord, “He which converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.”



ANOTHER IMPORTANT QUESTION :
WHAT HAVE I DONE THIS DAY TO MAKE SURE MY
OWN SALVATION ?

TIME is introductory to eternity. It is given to us to prepare for an eternal, an unchangeable state of existence. The eternal future depends on the present. What we sow in this world, we shall reap in the next. As we live, we may expect to die; and as we die, so we shall remain for ever. We are by nature and by practice sinners; as such we deserve punishment, and are exposed to never-ending suffering. But we need not perish, for God has sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. That our sins may be pardoned through his precious blood, and our persons justified by his perfect obedience. All he did on earth, he did for sinners; and all he suffered on earth, he suffered for sinners. His blood is our all-sufficient atonement, and his obedience is our justifying righteousness. But how does the atonement and obedience of Jesus become ours? By faith only. A

what is faith? It is giving credit to his word; placing confidence in his work; and depending solely upon him for pardon, peace, purity, and acceptance with God. But is faith alone sufficient to give us an interest in the perfect work of Jesus, and to entitle us to everlasting life? It is quite sufficient, for his own word declares, "*He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.*" He hath also declared with his own mouth, "*He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.*" But true faith will never exist alone, it always produces repentance towards God; generates love to the Saviour; and leads to the performance of good works. Every true believer is sorry for his sins; he confesses them before God with shame; pleads the blood of Jesus, that they may be pardoned; and strives to conquer his bad habits in the strength of the Lord. Every real Christian loves the Saviour who died for him, and prays most heartily to be consecrated entirely with all he hath to the Redeemer's service and praise. He wishes to do whatever the Lord requires of him; to go wherever the Lord will send him; and if he lives, to live unto the Lord; or if he dies, to die unto the Lord. He places *no dependence* on his own works, but relies

366 *Another Important Question.*

altogether on the service and sacrifice of the Lord Jesus for salvation; and then does all he can to honour his Saviour, and to benefit his fellow-men. He lives by faith in Christ, or by believing the word of Jesus, trusting in the merits of Jesus, and exercising confidence in the veracity of Jesus; but while he thus lives by faith in Christ, he is careful to maintain good works. His object, from day to day, is, to make his calling and election sure; so that no one may justly doubt the truth of his profession, and that he may have no reason to doubt himself, but that he is saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation. Is this the true state of the case? It is. Then let *me* ask, What have I done this day to make sure my own salvation? Have I exercised faith in Christ? Have I confessed my sins before God? Have I prayed for grace to obey the commands of God? Have I been striving against sin? Have I sought to bring honour to the Saviour's name? Have I pitied sinners, and set my heart upon rescuing some of them from eternal flames? Have I endeavoured to subdue some lust—to mortify some corruption—to conquer some bad habit—and to be more assimilated to the likeness of the Lord Jesus Christ?

Another Important Question. 367

Have I mourned over sin, sighed for holiness, and kept my eye steadily fixed on glorifying God? Or, have I lost sight of eternity, neglected my duty, and been living to myself? Has there been no communion with Jesus, no zeal for God, no pity for sinners? If so, is there not reason to doubt, that my religion is but a form, my profession a pretence, and my danger of eternal death imminent? Faith without works is dead. Can such faith save us? Never. It is utterly impossible. If, therefore, we would not deceive our own souls, if we would not plant thorns in our dying pillow, if we would not sink into hell under a profession of religion; let us examine ourselves carefully, let us reform our lives thoroughly, and let us give all diligence to make our calling and election sure. Every morning let us ask, "What course shall I pursue this day, to put the reality of my religion beyond doubt?" And every evening let us inquire, "What have I done this day to make sure my own salvation?" May the words of the Holy Spirit sink down deep into our hearts, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap."



“BEHOLD, HE COMETH!”

THESSE are God's words. They are intended to awaken attention to a subject of the greatest importance, to arouse our hopes and expectations, and to excite watchfulness and joy. “*He cometh!*” Who cometh? The Lord Jesus. He came once in humiliation to reveal the Father's mind, and to offer a sacrifice for our sins: having done so, he returned to heaven to present his blood, and obtain God's blessing as our great High Priest. He will come again to raise his dead saints, to change his living ones, to execute judgments on the ungodly, and to reign before his ancients gloriously. God will give unto him the throne of his father David, as he has promised him; and he will exercise his kingly office, where he taught as a Prophet, and made atonement as a Priest. He is now interceding for us, and will soon come and receive us unto himself; that we may all be one, as he is one with the Father, and the Father is one with him. He will change our vile bodies, and fashion

them like unto his glorious body. He will clothe us with glory, and we shall reign with him upon the earth. *He cometh!* But when? Soon, it may be very soon. We are not certain that he will stay away another day. It is long since he said, "*Behold, I come quickly!*" He is expecting that his enemies will soon be made his footstool. He will come as a thief,—suddenly, unexpectedly, in flaming fire. When the world is saying, "Peace and safety;" when hosts of professing Christians are fast asleep, like the foolish virgins, the proclamation will be made, "*Behold, the Bridegroom cometh.*" Beloved, let us live daily *looking* for, and *expecting* the coming of our Lord. Let us *watch*, because the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. Let us be found *waiting* for the Son of God from heaven. Let us *work* for him, as those who believe he may come at any moment to examine their performances, and reward every one according to his works. Jesus will soon be here, are we ready to receive him? Would the announcement that he had come, fill us with joy and pleasure? Are we sanctified by his Spirit? Are we justified in his righteousness? Are we daily *washing* our robes and making them white

in his blood? Are
truth, and our han
in his service? Ar
and our whole pers
a living sacrifice?

"Behold, I come q
response in our bo
nestly say, "Even
"Behold he cometh
eye shall see him."

"Jesus, hail! wh
All above, an
Lord of life, thy
Cheers, and q
When we think
Lord, we own i
King of glory, r
Thine an even
Nothing from t
Those whom
Happy objects c
Destined to beh
Saviour, hasten
Bring, O brin
When, the awft
Heaven and e
Then with gold
Glory, glory to



“I SAY UNTO ALL, WATCH!”

THE Lord Jesus speaks to all who read his word, or hear his servants. He speaks of his second advent. He assures us that he will return to our world. That he expects his disciples to be ready to receive him. That he will come in his own glory, in the glory of his Father, and with his holy angels. That he comes to complete the salvation of his people, and introduce them into perfect liberty. To present his church unto himself most glorious, not having spot, wrinkle, or any such thing. When he comes, he will silence every groan, purge out every stain, and perfectly remove all disease. Holiness, happiness, and health will then characterize his people; and himself will be their portion, and his presence their joy for ever. He will come in an unexpected moment, like the flash of lightning; the trumpet will sound, and Jesus will be here. He may come *to-day* or *this night*, when we are wrapped in sleep. Therefore we should be *ready*, we should be watching. The coming

"I say unto all, Watch!"

of Jesus should be always before our minds as the object of our hope, the subject of our meditation, and the most powerful incentive to holiness. Nothing preserves the believer from yielding to temptation, indulging the flesh, or committing sin, like the thought, "My Saviour may come while I am doing so." What! shall I yield to Satan, indulge in sloth, gratify my carnal lusts, or mix up with the present evil world, when I expect my Lord and Master every moment? Impossible! Nothing will so effectually preserve us from sin, fortify us against temptation, consecrate us to God, and make us active in God's ways, as the believing expectation of the sudden appearance of our Lord in glory. This is one cause who Satan hates the doctrine of the second advent, and endeavours to prejudice professors against it, and lead persons into unscriptural speculations which hold it. Beloved, let us believe our Lord's testimony that he will come as a thief—let us receive the assurance of his Apostles, "The coming of the Lord draweth nigh"—let us attend to the Spirit's exhortation, "Be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace without spot, and blameless." Lord Jesus come quickly! We long to see thee

sigh to be for ever with thee, we groan to be made like thee, we daily desire the adoption, even the redemption of our bodies. Can we love thee, and not wish to be with thee? Can we believe thy word, and not long for thy glorious appearing? O come, come quickly, and destroy the Man of Sin, take to thyself thy great power and reign, and let the whole earth be filled with thy glory! Come and render the world thy kingdom, and thy church complete in numbers and holiness!

"Lift your heads, ye friends of Jesus,
Partners of his suff'rings here:
Christ, to all believers precious,
Lord of lords, shall soon appear:
Mark the tokens
Of his heavenly kingdom near!
Sun and moon are both confounded,
When the Lord shows forth his might;
When, with angel-hosts surrounded,
In his Father's glory bright
Beams the Saviour,
Shines the everlasting Light.
Lo, 'tis He! our heart's desire,
Come for his espoused below!
Come to join us, with his choir,
Come to make our joys o'erflow,
Palms of victory,
Crowns of glory to bestow."



A WORD TO THE BEREAVED.

"I spake unto thee in thy prosperity: but thou saidst,
I will not hear."—JER. xxii. 21.

PROSPERITY is not always a blessing. Ease sometimes genders hardness. Discipline is absolutely necessary. The Lord speaks to the prosperous, but they are too busy to attend. He brings a cloud over their affairs, he changes his dispensation, and says, "Hear ye the rod." There is a parent bereaved of a lovely child; it was an idol; or, if not, it was in a fair way of becoming so. The affections were set upon it. The Lord was displaced by it. It became absolutely necessary to remove it, for nothing else would do. The Lord had spoken by his word, by his ministers, by the gentle voice of his Spirit, but all was disregarded. The fond and foolish parent would not hear. Now the beloved object is taken away, and the idolater refuses to be comforted. The Lord's ways are called mysterious. The heart rises in opposition, and it is just ready to indulge in hard thoughts of Him, or to murmur against Him. But it must not be. No.

rather examine thy course. Turn over the pages of thy past history. Attend to the Lord's inquiry, "*Hast thou not procured this unto thyself, see thy way?*"

An eastern shepherd had taught his flock to know his voice and follow him. But on one occasion, when the weather was fine, and all was pleasant, he wished to lead his flock to another spot. He called them to follow him; a ewe who was feeding with her lamb beside her, refused to do so. He turned and snatched up her lamb and carried it off in his bosom, and she readily henceforth followed his call. Just so the good Shepherd, when we allow our lambs so to engross our attention, or captivate our affections, that we neglect to hear his voice, and obey his call, takes our lamb, lays it in his bosom, saying, "*Follow me.*" Bereaved Christian, has Jesus taken away your lamb? He has laid it in his bosom. He is carrying it to his Father's house. He will place it beyond the reach of the storm, the wolf, and painful disease. He is tender over it. He will take the utmost care of it. He will feed it, and lead it to living fountains of water. He will wipe away every tear from its eyes. It shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither

376 *A Word to the Bereaved.*

shall the sun light on it, nor any heat. It is safe. It is happy. It is at home. It knows its Shepherd's voice, is always in its Shepherd's presence, and enjoys its Shepherd's love. Happy lamb! Gracious Shepherd! Glorious flock!

Beloved! the Shepherd, who has your lamb in his bosom, still gently whispers, "*Follow me.*" He spoke to you in your prosperity, but you would not hear; he speaks to you now in your sadness and sorrow, listen and attend to his voice. Follow him into his chambers of secret communion, there he will soothe and solace your soul. Follow him into his ordinances where he feeds his flock, and he will make you to lie down in green pastures, and lead you beside the still waters; he will restore your soul. Follow him in the path of tribulation with patient spirit and steady pace, and he will show you the path of life, and conduct you to his Father's right hand, where there are pleasures for evermore. Look not for your missing lamb, but look up in the Shepherd's face; there love is enthroned in brightness, and sympathy speaks in tears. Look at the Shepherd's arms, your lamb is safe there; and look at his warm bosom, your lamb is happy

there. It was necessary that he should thus try you, and you will see this by-and-bye. At present believe his word ; he says, "I will do you no hurt." Believe his love to you, it is too great to suffer the presence of a rival, or to allow you to injure yourself by improper attachments. Had he loved you less, he might have spared your feelings. You might have retained your loved one. Can you regret that Jesus loves you so much ? Could you wish him to love you less ? My friend, weep no longer. Dry up your tears. Listen to your Shepherd's voice. Follow in your Shepherd's footsteps. Detach your affections from earth and earthly things, and set them on those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. It is but a little while, and we shall have done with everything here. If the Lord had not taken your child *now*, you must have left it *very soon* ; and if you had left it behind you in a world like this, who can tell what might have been its sufferings or its sorrows ? If the Lord had not taken it from you, it may have been necessary that he should take you from it, and this might *have been far worse*. Your Saviour has *done wisely*, you will see this by-and-bye.

Your Saviour has acted kindly, and the time is coming when you will acknowledge it. Silence, then, your complaints. Dry up your tears. Rise from your mourning. Go forth at thy Redeemer's call, and ask, as you fall in submission at his feet, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" We may anticipate his reply. "Love me more. Keep closer to my side. Speak to me more frequently, and more fully. Live for my honour. Walk by my word. Let nothing occupy my place in your affections. Rest in my love to you. Rely on the promises I have made you. Attend to the cautions I have given you. Expect the mansion which I am now preparing for you." Lord Jesus, let us not refuse to hear thee, but give us thy grace in such abundance, that we may listen to catch the first sounds of thy voice, and stand ready to do whatsoever thou shalt command, or to surrender whatsoever thou shalt call for!





A YOUNG MOTHER'S PRAYER.

OCCASIONED BY AN EXCLAMATION UTTERED BY MRS. C——, OVER
HER FIRST-BORN, IN THE PRESENCE OF THE WRITER.

"LORD, bless my babe!" the youthful mother cried,
And fondly pressed her infant to her breast;
Then offered it to Him, who loved and died,
To give poor suffering mothers peace and rest.

It was her first-born, and she lov'd it well,
Admired each feature, full of strange delight;
Then turned the kindness of her God to tell,
Whose tender care had bless'd her with the sight.

Perhaps she thought, "Ah! If I had been blind,
And felt my lov'd one on my bosom lie,
But could not see its face,—my God, how kind
To let me see my baby's lovely eye!

' Its little head had slumbered on my breast,
Its velvet cheek awakened sweet surprise;
Its ruby lips a mother's bosom prest,
Who longed to see it with her poor blind eyes.

"Or, if I had been deaf, and could not hear
Its little voice which thrills through all my soul.
How often had I shed the bitter tear,
And found it hard my feelings to control.

380 *A Young Mother's Prayer.*

"To know it prattled, pleasing all around,
And calling *Mother* with an angel's voice !
Unable to drink in the charming sound,
How could I with a mother's joy rejoice !

"But I have eyes to see my darling child,
And ears to listen to its feeblest cry ;
My heart has danced already, while it smiled,
And I have seen strange beauty in its eye.

"Or, had my babe been blind, and could not see
Its mother's face, or nature's beauties bright ;
How painful and distressing unto me,
Its sightless eye-balls destitute of light.

"Or, if it had been deaf, and could not hear
My voice, which seeks to soothe and hush its cries ;
That were a burden I could scarcely bear,
Though to complain, in me, would be unwise.

"But my sweet babe has sight and hearing too,
Its senses and its members are complete ;
The goodness of my God in this I view,
And lay my lov'd one at my Saviour's feet.

"I do feel grateful, O thou God of love !
Accept the praises of my thankful heart ;
And let me, though a sinner, daily prove
The peace thy presence only can impart.

"Lord, bless my babe ! thy daughter let it be ;
In early life convert it by thy word :
Oh, may it soon thy great salvation see,
And own thee as its Saviour and its Lord !

A Young Mother's Prayer. 381

"A youthful mother offers up her child,
Saviour, accept and fill it with thy love;
May it be holy, gentle, loving, mild,
And all the riches of thy mercy prove.

"Teach me to train it in thy holy ways,
And early lead it to thy gracious throne;
Oh, let my babe show forth my Saviour's praise,
And by it may thy holy will be done!

"I would not nurse it for the world or sin.
Or see it prove an enemy to thee;
I'll early try its little heart to win,
And pray that it may consecrated be.

"It was thy gift, I love it for thy sake,
And hope to see it live thy name to fear;
Mother and babe into thy keeping take,
And all through life, oh, may we find thee near!

"Nor let my child assume my Saviour's place;
To him my warmest love is ever due;
Blest Spirit, daily fill my mind with grace,
That Jesu's glory I may still pursue.

"Lord, bless my babe! and spare it to me still,
Healthy and strong to comfort my fond heart;
Oh, may it walk by thy preceptive will,
And in thy service all its powers exert.

"'Tis thine, created by thy power alone—
As thine, I wish to treat it day by day;
Oh, may thy precious blood its sins atone,
And from its spirit purge each stain away.

382 *A Young Mother's Prayer.*

"Accept my feeble praise for mercies given,
And keep me near thy side through all my way;
Conduct and teach me 'till I enter heaven,
Nor let me from thy holy precepts stray.

"A mother's heart, before a Saviour's throne,
Would thus her fondest wishes now express ;
To me be all thy tender mercy shown,
And do, dear Saviour, do my baby bless !

"Thou hadst a mother once, when here on earth ;
Thou know'st how anxious is a mother's heart ;
Oh, grant, do grant my child a second birth,
Thy Holy Spirit to her soul impart.

"A mother's tears are precious in thy sight,
A mother's prayers thou surely wilt receive ;
Oh, fill a mother's breast with joyous light,
And to my darling girl thy blessing give.

"Jesus, to thee eternal praise be given,
I bless and magnify thy holy name :
May all who live on earth or reign in heaven,
Unite with heart and soul to do the same.

"Thou, thou art worthy honour to receive,
The highest honour earth or heaven can raise ;
Let all who from thy fulness, grace receive,
In one harmonious anthem sound thy praise.'





I N D E X.

	Page
Affection Baffled	93
A Good Character	185
A New Year's Motto	100
An Address to a Newly Formed Church of Christ.....	344
An Apostolic Requirement	252
An Example to Deacons	309
An Important Question	359
Another Important Question	364
An Inquiry for the New Year	246
An Unwise Son	30
A Source of Comfort	115
Are You a Christian?	314
A Word for Servants	148
A Word to Servants	154
A Word to Ministers	222
A Word to Deacons and Churches	226
A Word to the Bereaved	374
A Young Mother's Prayer	379
Behold He Cometh	238
Consistent Teaching	50
Counsel and Comfort	35
David's Question Improved	265
Divine Care	5
Family Prayer	302
For what end have I Lived?	80
Good Counsel	179
Hindrances to Conversion and Church Membership	124
How shall I obtain Peace?	193
I say unto All, Watch	371
May and Must, or Present and Future	328
No Complaining	202
Peter's Question Improved	270
Power with God	47
Prepared for the Worst	378
Procrastination	297
Purity	40

	Page
Questions for Conscience	175
Real Religion	162
Saul's Question Improved.....	200
Suppose I should Die Suddenly	339
The Church's Complaint	179
The Design of the Gospel	143
The Fallen Professor	167
The Fear of Death	238
The First Day of the First Month	287
The Jailor's Question Improved.....	273
The Lord is thy Keeper.....	206
The Love of Christ.....	84
The Object to be Pursued	319
The Poor Man's Course and Comfort	231
The Prayer of Faith	291
The Prayer of Moses	106
The Safe Guard	132
The Silent Monitor	215
The Sons of God	11
The Weaver's Shuttle.....	88
The Word of Command	23
The Christian's Daily Prayer	16
Too Late	138
Two Questions to You	278
What is My Business?	75
What is Your Life?	63
Why was I Born?	71









